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DESCRIBED IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

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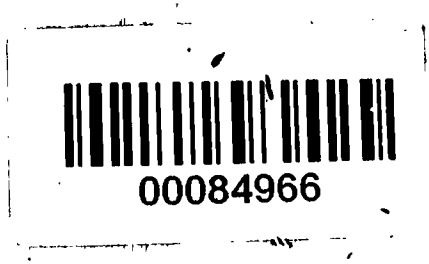
TO HER WHOSE PRESENCE ENHANCED EVERY PLEASURE; WHOSE AFFECTION SHARED EVERY TRIAL; AND WHOSE REMEMBRANCE HAS RENDERED THE REVISAL OF THESE LETTERS A TASK OF MOURNFUL SWEETNESS, THE FOLLOWING VOLUMES ARE DEDICATED.



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LETTERS FROM THE BALTIC.

LETTER THE FIRST.

Various motives of Travel—Dramatis Personæ on board a large Steamer—A severe Storm—Death of a horse—Anchorage at Christiansand in Norway — The Paris Steamer—Hamlet's Castle—Elsineur—Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton—Arrival at Copenhagen.

Of all the pleasures and luxuries which the blessings of modern peace have brought in their train, none are more universally desired, pursued, attained, and abused than those of travelling. Of all the varying motives which impel the actions of mankind, at this or any time, none are so multifarious, so relative, so contradictory, and so specious as those of travelling. The young and ardent, borne on the wings of hope — the listless and vapid, pushed forward on the mere dancing wire of fashion—the restless and disappointed, urged

onward by the perpetual spur of excitement, all bring a different worship to the same idol. If there be good angels watching our movements from above, gazing, as the deaf, on the busy dance of life, and insensible to the jarring tones which impel it, how utterly incomprehensible must those inducements appear to them which drive tens of thousands annually from their native shores, to seek enjoyments which at home they would not have extended a hand to grasp, to encounter discomforts which at home would have been shunned as positive misfortunes, to withhold their substance where it ill can be spared, to spend it where it were better away—which lead individuals voluntarily to forsake all they can best love and trust, to follow a phantom, to double the chances of misfortune, or at best but to create to themselves a new home to leave it again, in sorrow and heaviness of heart, like the old one. But such is human nature;—seldom enjoying a good but in anticipation, seldom prizing happiness till it is gone; and such the reflections, inconsistent if true, of one who, self-condemned, is

following in the motley herd of these emigrants, and who has now outwardly quitted all of England, save a narrow blue strip on the horizon which a finger may cover.

And now even that has disappeared: and I may turn with undivided attention to this little cluster of mankind, to this tiny epitome of the great world, who scarcely before had one interest in common, and are now all bound to the same bourne, without, perhaps, two motives in unison. What parts they intend to play on our tossing boards by no means yet appear. Some are on the sick list already, others on the verge of enrollment—some inviting but not accessible—others too forbidding in their sullen walk overhead, in the deep retirement of their macintoshes, to make it a matter of interest whether they be the one or the other. Families still cling together, for the further bound, the firmer does the English nationality adhere, and all maintain a quiet reserve, except a few huge-ringed Germans, in whose favour one would scarcely care first to waive it, and a Frenchman, an old officer of the empire, who is

unobtrusively attentive to all. It argues no want of Christian charity to judge at first sight what is displayed at first sight. That portion of character which each individual first brings to market is his taste—it matters not whether in dress, manners, or conversation, and any uncalled-for exhibition of the deeper and more sacred parts of a character at this stage of acquaintance, is as much at variance with the rules of taste as the grossest neglect of conventional courtesy would be on the other hand.

Our most conspicuous group is an English gentleman, with his wife and family. Himself, with a high-priestral air, and aristocratic bearing, and a melodious voice, and a frame of strength that might better have been bestowed on one of our sailors; his wife, a pretty delicate woman, who tripped at first with a light foot by his side, but is now laid low in her berth, with her little boy of six years old tumbling about her. The daughter, a lovely girl of seventeen, still remains proof to the increasing movement, and braves a cold wind without cloak or boa, showing a white throat round

which her light ringlets, escaping from a cloth travelling cap, more becoming than serviceable to the pretty countenance beneath, wind themselves in lengthening circles. Then follows a Swedish lady with two daughters, or nieces, whose timid bearing contrasts most strangely with her own. In truth, she promises to prove but a troublesome addition to the party, and it would be difficult to define to what school of propriety her manners belong, or how she contrived to make them pass current in the land we have just quitted. She may be a worthy woman, but wants the good taste to seem so—may Neptune not spare her. To her succeed various sundries — single ladies and single gentlemen, and a newly-married couple, who came on board most vehemently enamoured, but now sit with averted faces, and crest-fallen looks, and seem to find Cupid anything but a good sailor. And lastly, our good captain, who, before starting, we found in no very amicable discussion with two stout gentlemen, and who retained his ruffled looks for the first few hours of our voyage, but now shines forth

a man of kindnesses and courtesies, appearing with a merry anecdote, or some tempting cordial for those who can still be tempted, and shaking his head with a serio-comic expression as he finds his saloon emptying and his berths filling, though he does not seem much distressed about it either. Our chances of a pleasant voyage seem but slender, the wind is dead ahead, and whispers are passing round that the vessel is unduly laden. Upon the fore-decks are fixed six pyramidal masses of lead which completely submerge that end, lifting our aft end out of the waves, and increasing the movement in a proportionate degree. The second cabin and every other spare space is broken up and filled with cargo, which quarters a few very shabby passengers upon our saloon; while a beautiful horse, bound for the Prince of Oldenburg, but with small chance of reaching him, being denied the necessary accommodations for a voyage of this length, was placed in an open crib upon deck, where the first few rough seas threw him down, and where he now lies, drenched with

salt water, in a state of suffering which wrings all hearts to behold. The merchant part of the vessel is the business of the directors to whom she belongs. In our present prospects, therefore, the two fat worshippers of Mammon, who disturbed our worthy captain's peace of mind at the onset, are thought of with no good will.

Three days have now elapsed since I took up the pen, and three such days as will scarcely be forgotten by any one on board. Were it not for my oath of fidelity I might be tempted to pass over the scenes of the interim rather than wring one sigh, though it were of thankfulness, from hearts I love. The rolling and labouring of the vessel increased with every hour; the fore-end settled more completely under the waves, whilst ours swung to and fro, describing almost a half circle at every swell. As for the sufferings below, though of little moment when compared with the labours and exertions on deck, yet they were such as I question whether any overhead would have exchanged with — and yet the miserable beings in the berths were almost

envied by those whose proud stomachs, and but few there were, still allowed them the use of their feet,—if such it could be called, when the latter were taken from under you at every instant. Chairs tipped over—sofas glided away — our meals were snatched between high entrenchments, while at any more desperate toss every arm was extended to embrace the decanter, or any other fragile neighbour who seemed in danger of falling. At first, all this was borne with infinite good humour, and there was plenty of the ludicrous to supply the absence of the comfortable, but soon this vanished amidst the tumult of the elements, jokes came few and far between from lips which carefully suppressed other feelings, and the tacit freemasonry of anxiety was all that remained to the slender remnant in the saloon. Three exhausting days had thus been passed, each rougher than its predecessor, and the evening of the third now wore on frightfully. The promptitude of all hands—the fearful shocks — and the upturned position of the vessel, banished even the small comfort which

our ignorance of sea matters had afforded. A few of us, unable to quit the comfort of companionship, lingered up by the light of a small lamp sunk deep in a basin. The steward and stewardess each stood at the door of their respective departments. The pretty young English girl, who had meanwhile much associated herself with me, and hitherto proved a stout sailor, now, giving way to a sense of danger her short life had never before experienced, flung herself on my neck and wept in agony. I tried to comfort her, but words of comfort came strangely from one who knew none within, and were contradicted too instantly by the wild hubbub around. I felt like a false prophet, saying "peace, peace," where there was no peace. There are not many who have leisure to note the various sounds of a desperate vessel—the horrid crack and strain which accompanies each descent into the abyss, and which the ear drinks greedily in till it knows them by heart, or till a new wrench, louder than the foregoing, startles and probes you to a fresh sense of fear. Or, worse than all, the

swimming, deathlike suspense of sound and movement, when she lies powerless in the curdling deep, and the moan of the gale, and the toll of the watch bell, sounding like your knell, is heard above. At this moment, a tremendous sea lifted us from the ocean, and then hurried us crashing down to a depth whence it seemed impossible for any inanimate object to recover itself. All the furniture fell around, and, in the convulsive grasp with which I clung to my companion, I felt another arm was round her neck—it was her mother—pale and agitated—her little boy on her other hand. The stewardess was on her knees, and the steward, with the sang-froid of long sea experience, coolly said, "such another sea will finish us." All now rushed from their berths, sickness was forgotten in the general panic, and the captain's clear voice was heard calling down the companion, "Let the passengers prepare to come on deck at a moment's warning, but not *before*." Not a word now was spoken, and with hearts less appalled with the actual presence of danger, than wrung with the

recollection of home and friends, each prepared himself or assisted others. And thus we waited—some trembling, others cold and firm as marble, none in foolish lamentations; our hearts sick with the excessive tension which weighted the overladen minutes; every instant expecting the dread summons on deck—every instant thankful that its predecessor had left us in safety. Four mortal hours, from midnight till four in the morning, the struggle lasted, when the captain appeared amongst us and bade us retire to rest; no question was asked him, but his bleached face and worn looks showed the wear of mind and body he had undergone. Thus our trial ended. Thanks be to God, and our good ship.

The next morning a late breakfast gathered together a few silent, languid customers; for the complete exhaustion, the dreadful stretch to which every feeling of our minds and nerve of our bodies had been subjected, now made itself felt. Nor was the rolling of the vessel at this hour any joke. We ate with our fingers, for knives and forks would have been too danger-

ous implements; plates were superfluous where not one thing kept its place for one moment. The impossibility of inducing the tea-pot and tea-cups to act in the necessary concert excited a few faint smiles; when down went the coffee pot, and the milk after it, which loosened our muscles more effectually. I was glad of this opportunity to witness a really fine sea, and, being securely lashed on deck, gazed on a liquid wall of the most exquisite marine colours, battlemented with crests of angry foam which bound in our horizon to a narrow span. Towards the fore-end all was devastation—the water had torn away all it could reach; but there stood those ill-fated masses of lead, like harpies of evil omen upon us, unmoved by the dreadful rocking of the storm. They had been cursed enough in that night by the ship's company, whose united strength had not sufficed to stir them one inch from their place; and with them, the directors, whose cupidity had planted them there. And this reminds me of a confession which my young friend has made me, and which is too pretty to be withheld.

Many a prayer during the hours of suspense had burst from her youthful heart, and, in her anxiety to render them most acceptable to the throne of grace, she bethought herself that a Christian ought to pray for her enemies. But now came a difficult question!—who were the enemies of happy seventeen? who had ever frowned on that happy face? At length it occurred to her that those who had brought her into this strait were her only legitimate foes, and I grudge the greedy directors the ingenuous prayer which went up for them on that night of terror. The chief danger had arisen from the possibility of both engine fires extinguishing at once. The tremendous sea which dashed over us at midnight had quenched one, and had the other shared its fate, the vessel, from the contrary gale, the furious sea, and its own fettered and logged condition, must have become unmanageable

But while I am talking of dangers past, who has thought on the poor horse! alas! the noble creature lay on its side—its eyes closed, every joint shattered, only *not* dead. The captain was besieged with entreaties to have it released

from its pain; but here cruel policy interfered, and for a horse of this value, though its end be certain, he dared not be responsible. It died the next day.

We now changed our course, and steered for Christiansand, in Norway. In a few hours all was quiet, the sky became serene, the liquid mountains sank, and a bold, rocky coast, softening in the rays of the evening sun, appeared in sight. We reached the little haven, through magnificent defiles of rock, about six in the evening, and this quiet anchorage after the late severe struggle seemed like lassitude after pain. Here, we put the whole little Christiansand world into a commotion. The decks were crowded with loitering staring individuals, while we made ready to go on shore and explore ere it should become too dark. Now that all was safe, the Swedish lady thought fit to act a scene and play the timid. On shore she would go, but screamed on descending the ship's side, and, laying herself literally along the ladder, refused to move up or down; while half a dozen boats below contended for her favours, and one of our rough tars called out

from above, "take a boat-hook to her." The captain, however, to whom she was very prodigal of her smiles, soon quieted all with the proffer of his arm, and we landed the lady in safety. Not much was to be seen in this little town,—wooden houses with red painted roofs, and a pavement to all appearance deposited by the sea; so after indulging some curiosity and exciting much more, for peeping heads flew to the windows as our motley group passed on, we returned to our own wooden walls. Not, however, to the lively conversation which had usually cheered our tea-table—all were still too subdued, and our safety still too recent, for us to have become indifferent to it. Alas! that it ever should be otherwise!

Awaking from a night of delicious refreshment, and inhaling the fresh breezes on deck, smoke was seen rounding the corner of the defile, and another large steamer entering with a majestic curve, anchored alongside of us. It was the *Paris* from Havre to St. Petersburgh, driven to harbour by the same storm, and

wearing more outward signs of damage than ourselves. An exchange of courtesies now commenced between these representatives of two such great nations. A party of us went on board her, and, had the touch of a wand transported us to the Palais Royal, the change could not have been more complete. It was Paris itself, and Paris as if no storm had ever been, or rather as if its reminiscence were worthiest drowned in a Bacchanal. Above seventy passengers were on board, all laughing, flirting, and drinking champagne, with levity in their flushed cheeks, and more than negligence in many a careless costume. As soon as seen we were toasted with loud cries of "Vive l'Angleterre," by a score voices and glasses—an honour which our quiet John Bullism received most ungraciously. But there were beautiful creatures among this reckless crew, with falling tresses, and loose costumes, like pictures by Sir Peter Lely, and looks as light as if they had studied under the same royal patron,—and French Viscomtes with Shakespeare-cut chins,—and Italian Opera

singers with bold flashing gaze,—and amongst the rest was a quiet, fair countrywoman, like a drop of pure crystal midst a row of false pearls. We longed to carry her off and give one of our party in exchange.

Quitting this noon-day orgie with disgust, we sought sympathy in the sober grandeur of Nature around, and, climbing the rocks which encompassed the little bay, wandered free as children among a wilderness of granite peaks and blocks, intersected with green selvages of rich moist grass; always gaining higher and higher, each taking the path that best suited his strength, till the panorama became so beautiful as to arrest all steps. Our position had opened alternate strips of sea and rock to the view, while the little remote cluster of Christiansand nestled itself secure into its hard grey back ground, and below us lay a few fishing barks with slender masts, in humble comparison with the proud steamers of France and England, which seemed swelled to twice their ordinary dimensions in the tiny rock-bound basin which afforded them anchorage. And, while we gazed, a bright

flash and a column of white smoke issued from our vessel's side, and seconds after came the dull report which was first bandied about in heavy sport from the nearer rocks, and then died away in the murmuring confusion of repetition among the distant defiles. This was our appointed signal—we therefore rapidly descended to the shore, and in our silent row to the ship gazed alternately into the water, lying like a bed of transparent crystal, several fathoms deep, over a thick forest of submarine vegetation, while the searching rays of the noon-day sun drew forth grotesque masses of light and shade, and revealed the forms of strange fish floating among the emerald branches;—and at the receding rocks whose rough sides our feet were scarce destined again to press. The anchor was soon lifted, and off we were to the north seas again, and, order being established, all the passengers, and as many of the crew as could be spared, assembled in the saloon, where a clerical fellow-passenger read the service of the day, with the thanksgiving prayers at sea, to as reverent a congregation as he ever

addressed; and thus gratitude having found appropriate terms, cheerfulness returned to all, and our ranks being swelled by our convalescent companions, the dinner table was as merry as possible.

There is certainly an analogy between naval men and medical men. Neither like to acknowledge the existence of danger. "Thinks I to myself on the night of the storm," said our captain, "you'll be monstrous fortunate, my good fellows, to find yourselves all above water to-morrow morning,—but 'no danger;'—I'll tell you what, sir, you may go seventeen hundred voyages and never have such another as this,—but 'no danger!'" Be this as it may, a requisition, destined for the English public journals, has been got up and signed by the principal passengers, representing the danger to which this nefarious mode of lading had exposed the vessel, and giving due praise to the captain, to whose cool courage and excellent navigation it is owing, under Providence, that we are not at this moment lying in that sun-lit forest below.

Our voyage now increased in interest; the coast of Jutland and Kronborg Castle, or, as tradition calls it, Hamlet's Castle, like a square mass on the waters, in sight, and vessels far and near studding the expanse around, and indicating the line of boundary 'twixt sea and sky, which the misty glow of a cloudless sun had almost fused into one.

At Elsineur, that key which unlocks the narrow sluice-gates of the Baltic, an hour's delay occurred to pay those dues, which are no mean compensation to Denmark for the scantiness of her absolute territory, and to take in a pilot to conduct us through the narrow slip which alone is navigable of this narrow sound. Our present locality recalled many naval reminiscences, and the new pilot at the helm occasioning a temporary leisure, we came in for some interesting particulars of our captain's life. Deriving his birth from the same county which sent forth Nelson, he had come under the particular charge of this great man — had served in his ship from the almost infantine period of his

entering the navy—had assisted at the bombardment of this very castle of Kronborg, which had attempted an opposition to their advancement on Copenhagen—and had seen a brother, post-captain at the age of nineteen, killed at his side a few days after his promotion. But with the setting of Nelson's star all advancement ceased; and now, with more deeds to relate, and more wounds to show than many an admiral, he is left a lieutenant after thirty years of service. Many were the anecdotes he related to us of Nelson's simplicity and boundless popularity on board his ship; his personal attachment to him was enthusiastic; but his voice dropped when he alluded to Nelson's evil angel under the most bewitching of female forms, the unfortunate Lady Hamilton. She had lived on board his ship, and gained the hearts of all the younger community, as much by her intercession in cases of petty delinquency, as by her irresistible fascination of person and manner. "If ever a couple loved each other it was those two; they were wretched out of each other's

sight." "But, by Heavens, sir," continued the captain, addressing the foremost of a rivetted audience, and relating the circumstance of his first introduction to the enchantress, when a midshipman of sixteen, by Lord Nelson — "by Heavens, sir! she kissed me!" And with as much *mauvaise honte*, though perhaps not quite so bright a blush as when he received that honour, off walked our little captain.

It was late in the afternoon when we reached Copenhagen, where we again revelled in quiet rest. Considering its maritime position and royal occupants, Copenhagen presents no imposing aspect, though the fertile meadows and rich foliage around give it an air of peace and plenty. There is something very pleasant in entering a perfectly new place, where you neither take nor leave a character—where you may stare about you, look behind you, and in short dispense with all those little decorums which you have the distinct recollection of having learnt with exceeding repugnance during your childhood.

We were received and escorted about by a gentleman to whom we had letters, and who was kind in the extreme; but, unfortunately, of many languages which he partially knew, he did not seem to have singled out any one for his particular use. Our conversation was therefore highly polyglotic, accompanied by a profusion of pantomimic smiles, which, with some of the younger members of our party, were near degenerating into something by no means so polite; and thus we wandered through the streets, a very merry group, till nightfall recalled us to the ship, and all further description of Copenhagen must wait for my next.

LETTER THE SECOND.

Copenhagen—The royal Palace—Late Queen of Denmark —Frauen Kirche—Thorwaldsen—Passage up the Baltic —Cronstadt—Russian Officers—First impressions of Petersburg—Annoyances of a Russian Custom House.

COPENHAGEN has a most agreeable aspect within. Wide, straight, modern streets, and narrow, crooked, ancient streets, with edifices of the same alternate character, and canals lined with vessels, make a picturesque and pleasing whole. The houses are most of them handsome, well-built, and Rotterdam-like, with the advantage over the latter of being all in true perpendicular. The ship's detention, lading in fresh coals, and tightening many a bolt which the storm had sorely tried, allowed us several hours for viewing the chief objects

of interest. Our first expedition was to the Royal Palace of Christiansborg, burnt down in 1794, and which, though now long restored to more than its former splendour, has never been re-inhabited by the royal family of Denmark. The apartments are very grand in scale, but only half-furnished; here and there an ordinary Kidderminster or Brussels carpet, and glass in the windows, such as our servants'-hall would have grumbled about. Their chief interest, therefore, was confined to some paintings, by a modern Danish artist, Professor Lund, representing the progress of Christianity, executed in a light dry style of colouring, but with a beauty of form and expression which puts him on a par with the Düsseldorf school, from which he appears to have studied. Also four smaller compartments, of Hope, Faith, Love, and Strength, by the same artist, were of truly Raffaellesque beauty. The ball-room, a grand apartment, was adorned under the gallery with a bas relief of great elegance, by Frend, a Danish sculptor; to all appearance a scholar of this

country's pride, the great Thorwaldsen, whose own unfinished contributions to this palace lay scattered on the floors of various rooms above, and are thus seen perhaps to greater advantage now than they will be by the next generation. The subjects are the triumphs of Bacchus, and those of Alexander. In the former the sheep and oxen introduced are especially worth attention; in the latter the figures and horses are in the grandest action. Thorwaldsen has introduced his own profile in an unobtrusive part, but his fine face differs in nothing from the classic heads around, except in superiority of intellectual expression.

One little room especially detained us, being entirely wainscotted, ceiling and all, with different kinds of coloured native woods; and in the striking contrasts and tender gradations, the delicate straw-colours, the pearly greys, the blood reds, and the jet blacks, the Danish forests have decked forth a beautiful palette.

The memory of the unfortunate Princess of England, Queen of Denmark, and mother

of the present aged monarch, is held in deep respect here, while retributive justice has fallen on that of her step-mother, the Queen Dowager. Owing, it is said, to the crimes and misery which these walls have witnessed, a superstition hangs over them, and, except for an occasional court ball, this fine palace has been erected to no purpose. The royal family reside in a trumpery edifice encircling a small *place*, through which the chief traffic of the city pours, and which, with discoloured walls, falling plaster, and a broken window in the most conspicuous part, looked anything but the abode of royalty. The country palaces, however, are many, and according to report of great beauty. In one wing of Christiansborg, the royal collection of pictures is kept, and access permitted to the public. These were above nine hundred in number, in good order, and with high-sounding titles; and in truth there were but few whose excellence spoke for itself. Of these the best were chiefly of the old German school—a head by Albert Durer of himself was the *chef d'œuvre* of the

gallery, and a most exquisite production; and a Lucas Cranach, portrait of an old man, in the same room was of great value.

The Exchange, close to Christiansborg, and on the verge of a canal, is a striking old brick building, somewhat in the Elizabethan style, with quaint pilasters, and rows of curiously adorned and battlemented attics, and a bronze steeple formed of four dragons reversed, their gaping jaws downwards and their coiled bodies tapering to a point. An antique tower of gigantic circumference in a remote street, also attracted our attention. This is ascended by a winding paved passage, so wide, that Peter the Great, on one occasion, drove to the top with four horses abreast—rather a difficult feat for the animal nearest the centre. Above is what in fine weather must be a fine view of town and harbour, but our clear sky had abandoned us, and something approaching to a rain made us begin to think of shelter. The new Frauen-Kirche had, however, to be seen. The English bombardment of 1807 reduced the old structure of this name to ashes,

but a new church on the same model has since been completed, adorned outside with some striking bas-reliefs by Thorwaldsen. The chief attraction, however, are the figures of the twelve apostles by the same great sculptor within—colossal statues of such grandeur of design and matchless beauty as alone to repay a journey from England. We lingered here in reverent admiration. The altar-piece, a bas-relief of Christ, is also very pure and touching. Thorwaldsen, now an old man past seventy, but with undiminished vigour of imagination, resides in this his native city, caressed and beloved by all classes. To all Swiss tourists his magnificent lion in the rock at Lucerne, executed before he had ever seen a living monarch of the forest, is a familiar object.

Having thus taken a summary of this city, which well deserves a longer stay, we proceeded to anticipate our good ship dinner most successfully by a delicious lunch at the hotel D'Angleterre, the best in Copenhagen. After which, providing ourselves with a few Danish souvenirs, in the shape of some of the toys and

woodware for which Copenhagen is famous, we returned, nothing loth, to our home on the waters, and awoke the next morning to another horizon of waves. The weather continuing favourable, our time was chiefly spent on deck, where the mid-day sun was not too sultry, nor the midnight moon too cool for enjoyment. These enormous steamers, while they occupy a middle station between the navy and merchant-service, are equally hostile to both. This swift mode of transporting cargo will supersede many a lagging merchantman, while the good pay of captain and mates, and certain provision attendant on long services, draws, in these times, many a volunteer from the navy, or, what is infinitely more valuable, many an experienced officer, of whom the Admiralty duly acknowledges the merit, but is by no means sorry to let shift for himself. The sailors, however, dislike the steamer service; they call them *smoke-jacks*, and object to the dirt, which with every precaution cannot be avoided. Our monster consumed a ton of coals per hour. Meanwhile our interest was confined to ob-

serving the motions of the Paris, now sole tenant with ourselves of the gulf, which had preceded us from Copenhagen, and which, after alternate passings and re-passings, we now fairly left behind; and to the few islands of the Baltic gliding past us; especially that of Hogland, more properly *Hochland* or high-land, a mountainous ridge covered with pasture and flocks. But who can feel dullness on board a large ship in fine weather, and what can be more picturesque than the various objects animate or inanimate which her decks present? The man at the wheel was a fine creature, and so elated with taking a place in my sketch-book, that we ran some risk of false steerage.

At Cronstadt, after a voyage of thirteen days, almost twice the average length, we rejoined the world, and lay the first night with a guardship alongside, all that was flat, uninteresting, and military, around, and a piercing arctic sky above us. Old England, however, nestled deep within our rafters, and we slept that night in our native atmosphere. It was

not until the next morning that we felt ourselves truly in a foreign clime, when our double dates, and other strange and double-faced things connected with Russian experience, commenced. A visit from an officer with several subordinates, whose beauties truly lay not in their exterior, was our first initiator—and a more uncouth, ill-mannered set never were seen. Our little captain, with a shrewd sparkle of the eye, bowing, and rubbing his hands, informed them, in his most urbane English, that he spoke nothing else, but was equally glad to see them; and finding all this civility secured but little attention, he directed their eyes to a decanter of spirits, which was better received. What they did on board would be difficult to say. They usurped a great deal of room in our saloon, and produced an immense number of sheets, of a substance which Russia has agreed to call paper; and the subordinates wrote as fast as they could, and the superior flourishing his sword-arm signed the same, with a mysterious concatenation of dots and dashes after. Then everything on board was

sealed with lead seals, from the hatches over the cargo to the minutest article of the passengers' luggage—from those much reviled masses of lead of twenty tons each to the innocent bandbox of not so many ounces. We were now anxious to proceed on to Petersburg, and awaited only further dots and dashes from a still richer pair of epaulettes hidden in the depths of Cronstadt. But here our first lesson was taken. Greatly to our triumph, the laggart Paris had been seen entering Cronstadt harbour only that morning, when now, equally to our dismay, we perceived the passengers descending very happily from her decks into the *Pyroskaff*, or small steamboat, which plies for that purpose between Petersburg and Cronstadt, waving their handkerchiefs most saucily to us, as if to say, "Ha! the tables are turned now." They, in truth, better understood the intimate understanding which exists between Russian justice and Russian roubles, by virtue of which the former always abdicates to the latter. Our descent into the Pyroskaff, not being facilitated by any such smoothing mea-

sures, was not admissible until three in the afternoon. Some of our number were going to their homes in Petersburg, others had left none in England; but there was one among them who looked back on the vessel as on the last link which bound her with home, and forward with a sense of loneliness not always cheered with courage.

Here also we were not relieved from guard. Three individuals in coarse uniforms—for here every being seems to wear a uniform more or less beautiful, accompanied us on to the Pyroskaff, and, lest peradventure we should bribe the captain to land it midway, or in any way to facilitate our suspicious purposes, kept an unremitting watch over our luggage. But perhaps our bribes had better have commenced nearer home. About our three hours' passage to Petersburg I can't say much. The air above was very keen, the couches below very soft, and the scene on either hand being a mere dismal swamp, many of our party dozed most comfortably till such time as Petersburg became visible, when we all hastened on deck to take

the first impressions of this capital. Behind us Cronstadt had sunk into the waters, and before us Petersburg seemed scarcely to emerge from the same, so invisible was the shallow tablet of land on which it rests. The mosque-like form of the Greek churches—the profusion of cupola and minaret—with treble domes painted blue with silver stars, or green with gold stars, and the various gilt spires, starting at intervals from the low city, and blazing like flaming swords in the cold rays of a Russian October setting sun, gave it an air of Orientalism little in accordance with the gloomy, grey mantle of snow clouds, in which all this glitter was shrouded. The loftiest and most striking object was the Isaac's church, still behung with forests of scaffolding, which, while they revealed its gigantic proportions, gave but few glimpses of its form. Altogether I was disappointed at the first *coup d'œil* of this capital—it has a brillant face, but wants height to set it off. The real and peculiar magnificence of Petersburg, however, consists in thus sailing apparently upon the bosom of the ocean, into

a city of palaces. Herein no one can be disappointed. Granite quays of immense strength now gradually closed in upon us, bearing aloft stately buildings modelled from the Acropolis, while successive vistas of interminable streets, and canals as thickly populated, swiftly passing before us, told us plainly that we were in the midst of this northern capital ere we had set foot to ground. Here all observations were suddenly suspended by a halt in the Pyroskaff, which ceased its paddles and lay motionless in the centre of the stream. In our simplicity we had imagined that the Cronstadt precautions had sufficed to qualify us for entering Russia, and reckoned on drawing up alongside the quay, and being allowed, after our many dangers and detentions, quietly to step on shore. But we were sad novices. Half an hour passed thus away, which to people, cold, hungry, and weary,—what should we have done without that nice nap?—seemed interminable; when a rush of fresh uniforms boarded us from another vessel, who proceeded to turn out the gentlemen's pockets and the ladies' reticules, and

seemed themselves in most admirable training for pick-pockets. Then one by one we were led across a plank to an adjoining ship, where they hurried us down to a committee of grave Dons sitting below, who scrutinised first our passports and then our features, and proceeded to note down a descriptive table of the latter of such a latitudinarian nature, that, in the scrawled credentials of identity which each received, no mother would have recognised her child. Colours, complexions, and dimensions were jumbled with utter disregard of private feelings. — Every gentleman had *une barbe noire*, every lady *la figure ovale*, and it was well if these were not reversed. These were accompanied by printed directions as to where to go, what to do, and how in general to behave ourselves whilst in his Imperial Majesty's dominions.

At length the moment of release came, and we were permitted to touch terra firma, such as it is in 'Petersburg, and carried off to the custom-house, a large building on the English quay. Here an immense salle, strewed

with hundreds of opened and unopened boxes, and dotted with loitering groups of *la Jeune France*, received us. With these latter we exchanged some looks of malice, as they lounged about, some yawning in weary impatience, others wringing their hands in impotent anger, while a black-looking being with face like a bull-dog and paws like a bear, fumbled and crumpled a delicate *garde-robe* without mercy—stirring up large and small, tender and tough, things precious and things vile, ruthlessly together, to the unutterable indignation and anguish of the proprietor. To witness the devastation of an English writing-desk was a curious sight to an uninterested spectator. First, the lock excited great anger, and was a convincing proof that little was to be done with Bramah by brute force; and, this passed, there ensued as striking an illustration of the old adage of a bull in a china-shop as could possibly be devised. Every touch was mischief. They soiled the writing-paper and spilt the ink; mixed up wax, wafers, and water-colours. Then, in their search for Rus-

sian bank-notes, the introduction of which is strictly interdicted, they shook out the blotting-book, whence a shower of letters of introduction, cards of address, and a variety of miscellaneous documents, floated to distant corners of the salle—ransacked the private drawer, of which they were perfectly *au fait*,—displaced all the steel paraphernalia, and then crammed them into their wrong places, cutting their fingers at the same time—the only action which afforded the spectator any unmixed pleasure; and now, smarting with the pain, flung down the lid, and left the grumbling owner to gather his scriptural fragments together as he best could. Beyond the writing-desk they did not choose to proceed. It was past the regulation time, and instead of allowing the weary traveller, as is usual in such cases, to take his carpet bag of necessaries, the smallest article was denied with a stolid pertinacity, which intimated no great sympathy on their parts for the comforts of clean linen.

All this is, and must be, most disgusting to

a traveller's feelings. This is not the intention of any custom-house in the world, or, if so of Russia, more's the pity. At best all custom-house regulations, in the case of the mere traveller, can but be considered as a necessary evil, which further falls on him just at the time when he is least fitted to bear unnecessary fatigue, detention, or vexation. The courtesy and hospitality of nations therefore demands that the needful forms be conducted with the utmost kindness and politeness, while good sense dictates their being submitted to in the same spirit. Few travellers remain long enough in Russia to wear off the disagreeable impressions of their inauguration scene, whereas I have seen foreigners, and Russians among the number, whose civil reception and gentlemanly treatment at the English custom-house and alien-office, inspired them with instant respect for the land they trod. And, after all, in which of these two countries are these regulations the least evaded? decidedly not in Russia. Those who are received with suspi-

sion will not be the most inclined to respect the laws.

In this frame of mind a party of us took the route to the English boarding-house, kept by Mrs. Wilson, in the *Rue des Galères*, English Quay, where rest and refreshment was promptly given and never more gratefully received.

LETTER THE THIRD.

Mrs. Wilson's boarding-house—Baron S.—Loan of a Soldier—Sight-seeing—Re-building of the Winter Palace—The Islands of Petersburg—The Casan Church—Academy of Arts—Brülloff's picture—General character of buildings—Pavement and glass—English eccentricities.

IT must not be imagined that, because established in an English boarding-house, I am met by familiar habits, or surrounded with familiar objects. We are apt to forget how far we are dependent on English-bred servants, and English-built houses, for the quiet course of comfort which in our native land seems as natural as the air we breathe. Otherwise I can join in the highest possible commendation of this well-conducted and most respectable establishment, which I should doubtless praise more unqualifiedly had I tried any other here. By

foreigners, who have tasted the sweets of English comfort at the fountain head, it is preferred to every other house of accommodation in Petersburg, and Count Matuschewitz has no other abode when here.

My letters of introduction soon procured their bearer much kind attention, and first and foremost among those who exercised these courtesies towards a stranger was Baron S., aide-de-camp to the Emperor, and Fort-major of Petersburg—a pale young man, seemingly sinking beneath the weight of a gorgeous uniform, who introduced himself with the utmost simplicity and kindness, and put at my immediate disposal his house, his horses, and everything he could command. These were soothing sounds after the irritation of the Douane. As an earnest of his intentions he further begged to leave at my disposal for the present, and for as long a time as I should think fit to retain—a soldier. As he evidently attached no more importance to this proposition, and perhaps less, than if he had offered me an extra pair of walking shoes, all

scruple on my part would have been misplaced; nevertheless, it was with undisguised amusement that I saw one of these military machines mount immoveable guard at my door. He was a brow-beat, rusty moustached, middle-sized man, with hard lines of toil on his sunburnt face—his hair, according to the compulsory and unfortunately disfiguring system of cleanliness adopted in the Russian army, clipped till the head was barely covered or coloured, and his coarse drab uniform hanging loosely about him: for soldiers' coats are here made by contract according to one regulation size, and, like the world, are too wide for some, too tight for others. But the sense of the ludicrous extended itself to my hostess, on my requesting to have a chair placed for him. "A chair!" she exclaimed, "what should he do with it?—standing is rest for him—" and in truth the Russian soldier is like his horse,—standing and lying are his only postures of repose. I found my poor sentinel a willing, swift, and most useful messenger in this city of scanty population and enormous distances, and, without much

self-applause, it may added he also found me a kind mistress, for the tyrannical, inhuman mode in which inferiors are here addressed is the first trait in the upper classes which cannot fail to disgust the English traveller. Our communication was restricted nevertheless to a smile on my side, as my orders were interpreted to him, and to "*Sluschouss*," "I hear," upon his receiving the same. And these significant words are indeed the motto of the lower orders.

As the first plunge into sight-seeing was not the most likely method of renovating an exhausted traveller, the Colonel judiciously proposed my commencing acquaintance with Petersburg by a few drives through the streets and in the environs. The most magnificent object, if you can select where all are magnificent, is the line of Palace Quay upon the Neva—beginning with the Winter Palace—united by covered bridges with the Hermitage—this again connected by magnificent links with the great mass of the Marble Palace, and so on to the summer garden—while marble vases and lions, of colossal size, bring the eye down to the

granite banks of the stream, where every column and gilded cupola is reflected in increased brilliancy. A casual observer would hardly remark the traces of fire in the grand structure of the Winter Palace. The entire shell stands perfect, though within, not a stone is left on its place. Two thousand workmen are now swarming about this vast hive, and the architect, Kleinmichael, straining every nerve to redeem his pledge of presenting this palace, ready inside and out, as it stood before, for the celebration of the Easter fêtes. In one light this destructive fire has proved a blessing; for the custom of consigning to solitude those suites of rooms occupied by a deceased Sovereign, had here closed so many of the finest apartments, that in a few more successions the reigning monarch would have been fairly turned out by the ghosts of his predecessors. The gilt cross, on the cupola of the private chapel of the palace, resisted the fury of the element, and, glowing with increased brilliancy in the light of the furnace around it, was watched by many an anxious eye in the crowd of believers be-

neath, who ascribe its preservation to miraculous intervention. This idea has proved a powerful engine in the hands of the architect, for under the conviction that a blessing rests on the palace the workmen toil with double assiduity at its renovation. Thence we proceeded down the splendid Nevski—over a graceful iron suspension bridge with gilt tips; passing the palace where Paul met his fate, in a room conspicuous by one window alone, and that a single sheet of plate glass.—Then past Peter's original little house, a perfect Dutchman—the first humble stone of this great capital, which occupies one corner of the summer garden, planted also by him. These are the resort of the beau monde in the spring, before they disperse into the country, and, pointing out to me the stunted elms, already almost dismantled of their scanty foliage, my companion observed with more of complacency than of humility in his manner, that they gave *shade* in the summer! Leaving these transparent thickets, we crossed one of the bridges of boats over the Neva, and entered the fortress on the Wassili-Ostroff, or Basil's

island, the guard turning out at every barrier to salute the Fort-major of Petersburg. Here many of the state prisoners, from the military delinquent of a few weeks' detention to the captive for life, are confined. The church was the only accessible part, the taper gilt spire of which is one of the most striking objects in Petersburg from a distance. The interior was gaudy with gilding and drapery. Service was going forward—the priests, with their wavy locks flowing on their shoulders, throwing about incense, muttering the mass, and staring at the strangers with equal unconcern. The most interesting objects were the tombs of several of the late Zars, including Alexander, and all of Catherine the Second that could die, and around hung various captured standards—the graceful crescent denoting whence they had been wrested.

We now continued our route to Kamenoi-Ostroff, or the stone island, to Jelaghine, Krestofsky, &c., and other islands, forming a miniature archipelago, on which the emperor and the Grand Duke Michael, as well as many of the nobility, have summer residences. Here

a pretty distribution of wood, water, and villa, faintly recalled the idea of Virginia water, though entirely on a stunted scale. The oak is seen here, but scarce rising above a shrub. We entered the imperial Datsch, or summer residence at Jelaghine. The house is very simple; logs of wood were burning in the open grates, and a cast-iron staircase leading to the upper rooms; on the third story was a small chapel, and behind the altar a sanctuary, which my woman's foot was forbidden to enter. This is the rule in all Greek places of worship. The Datsches of the nobility are all of wood, the Emperor's alone being of stone, and tortured into every incongruous form that bad taste can devise; the whole touched up and picked out with painted cornices and pilasters, in red and yellow ochre, and, once done, left to the mercy of the seasons. Each has just enough ground around to give the idea of an English tea-garden, with every appurtenance of painted wooden arch, temple, and seat to confirm it. At the same time it is here the established idea that such houses and such gardens are precise fac-

similes of an English country residence, and I fear my kind companion was a little chagrined at my not accepting this piece of homage to my native land. In this neighbourhood is also a Russian village, wooden cottages with deep roofs, and galleries running round like the Swiss, ornamented with most delicately carved wood; of course here was also plenty of red, blue, and yellow, for it seems that without these primary colours little can be done. The love of red especially is so inherent a taste in Russia that *red* and *beautiful* are, in a popular sense, expressed by the same word. But this is evidently the shew village of the capital, and almost entirely let to families for the summer. As for the roads, they were ancle deep in mud, and such as an English squire would hardly have suffered in his vicinity.

Our sight-seeing, properly speaking, commenced with the Casan church, which stands like a bat with extended wings on an open space just where the St. Catherine's canal intersects the Nevski; the body of the church being small in comparison with a grand semi-

circular peristyle of fifty-six columns, placed in rows of four deep. In the *place* before the church are two magnificent statues of Kutusoff, Prince of Smolenski, and of Barclay de Tolly. Altogether this edifice is a superb specimen of what Russian architects, Russian quarries, and Russian mines can produce. The grand entrance door in the centre beneath the peristyle is a master-piece of genius. It is divided into ten compartments of subjects in bas-relief from the Old Testament, the intermediate spaces occupied with figures of saints in haut-relief, and heads starting from circular frames; all of the most exquisite design, expression, and finish. We entered by a small side door, and seemed transported in a moment to some hall of the genii; riches glittered around in fabulous profusion, while a subdued light, a stupifying perfume, and a strain of unearthly harmony disposed the senses for mysterious impressions. Pillars of polished marble, in one solid mass from top to base, with gilt pedestals and capitals, supported the roof in couples. The altar was an open arch of dead and bright silver, in a

frame-work of gold, supported on semi-transparent jasper columns, and closed behind with a drapery of crimson velvet. The altar railings were each a bright, heavy Colossus of solid silver, any one of which would have furnished a very respectable side-board. Several huge candlesticks, eight feet high, of the same virgin metal, were burning with candles of all sizes, from the pillar of wax to the lowliest taper, the various votive offerings of pilgrims, before shrines of incalculable riches, consisting of pictures of the Virgin and Child, or of particular saints; the face and flesh parts alone being painted, and those most barbarously, for the Greek church appears to qualify the idolatry by the furthest possible departure from nature; real precious stones forming the appropriate colours in headdress or vest, and pearls, woven over, representing the white drapery. In the centre from the dome hung a gigantic chandelier of silver, over a circular mosaic pavement of the most graceful designs. The priests, clad like sorcerers, were murmuring their incantations, and flinging about incense, while invisible voices in

seraph tones chanted the responses. And then, to turn from all this blaze and gorgeousness, from walls of silver, and hangings of pearls, to the poor creatures who at this moment seemed the only objects of such display;—abject beings with tattered garments, decrepid bodies, and animal countenances, who stood crossing themselves, bowing at intervals before the shrines till their foreheads resounded on the marble floor, and staring around, gaping, or spitting, between every prostration,—old hags of nuns in filthy attire,—wretched cripples and loathsome beggars, whom one seed pearl from the Virgin's shoulder-knot would have enriched, but to whom in their faith the sacrilegious thought, doubtless, never occurred. Here also the trophies of conquered armies hung around; but this time the eagle was the emblem. Kutusoff's tomb is the only monument in the interior, and this is shortly to be removed. This church is dedicated to the holy Virgin of Casan, so called from a picture of the Virgin in the town of Casan which has an immense reputation for miracles. It is also distinguished

by the peculiarity of two unequal transepts; not, as some have alleged, from the peculiar form of the Greek cross, but simply for want of space on the canal side to continue the building.

Having thus taken the aggregate of a Russian church interior, for the rest are mere repetitions of the same barbaric splendour, unsanctified by true art, we proceeded to the Academy of Arts on the Wassili-Ostrof. This is one of those outwardly splendid piles, with ten times more space than in England would be allowed for the same object, ten times more out of repair, and ten thousand times dirtier. At the ceremony of Russian baptism the sign of the cross is made on the lips to say nothing bad, on the eyes to see nothing bad, on the ears to hear nothing bad—and, it must be supposed, on the nose also to smell nothing bad;—for the Russians do not seem inconvenienced by the trials to which this organ is exposed on entering their dwellings. But to return to this odoriferous Academy—the halls and staircase are all on a grand scale, and appropriately adorned with casts from the Laocoon, the Gla-

diator, and other celebrated statues of antiquity. A stripling population, students in uniform, and cadets from the colleges, to whom it was a half-holiday, were swarming in the extensive rooms; seemingly under no restraint except that of a dancing-master, before whom about fifty of them were dancing quadrilles with much grace and expression in a cloud of dust. They seemed to consider this very great fun, and twisted their slim male partners about most emphatically, while many a laughing eye turned upon the unbidden spectators; who, to own the truth, loitered longer in this room than the occasion required. But in these times, when good dancing has proved a quick step to advancement in Russia, this accomplishment is not to be neglected. The walls are lined with eight cartoons of boar hunts and sylvan sports by Rubens and Sneyders—the latter quite undeniable—of great merit, though we could procure no information of their history. Also a fine marble bust of this magnificent Emperor, which, had it been dug up in classic ground, would

have been declared a Grecian demi-god—it was impossible to pass without admiration. I wish his Douane were a little milder.

But the great attraction was Brülloff's picture of the fall of Pompeii—an immense canvass—at least twenty feet wide by fifteen high, which now ranks as one of the lions of the capital. This picture is a gallery in itself and one of absorbing interest. Above the scene hangs the dense black cloud as described by Pliny. To the right this is broken by a stream of forked lightning, whose livid light blends horribly with the red-hot sulphureous glare of the volcano, the outline of which is dimly visible. In the centre of the picture, where the light falls strongest, lies the body of a female, her arms extended—a crying infant lying upon her, with one little hand clinging to the drapery beneath her bosom: she has evidently been killed by a fall from a chariot, one broken wheel of which is close to her, and which is seen borne along at full speed in the distance by two terrified horses, while the driver, the reins twisted round his

wrist, is dragged behind them. Forwarder on the right, is a group of father, mother, and three sons: the aged father, trying with one hand to ward off the shower of ashes, is carried in the arms of the elder son, who, helmeted like a soldier, is carefully picking his way among the falling stones. The younger, quite a lad, is supporting the old man's feet, and gazing with a countenance of agony at a tottering monument. The second son is supplicating his mother to trust herself also in his arms, but, half extended on the ground, she gently repulses him, and affectionately urges his own safety. The expression and lighting of this group is beyond all praise. In the right corner of the picture is a lover bearing the body of his fainting mistress; from the chaplet on her head, and other bridal ornaments, they appear to have been just united. Behind is a grey horse in full light, furious with terror—his rider clinging with every muscle, while, half hidden, appears a frantic figure, its nails fastened into the animal's back in the attempt to mount. On the left of the centre is a terror-stricken family—

father, mother, and two children, cowering half naked beneath the red-hot hail, and forming a dark mass in opposition to a confusion of figures in full light behind them — some escaping terrified from the tottering portal of a building—others bearing children or valuables in their arms—a priest with the golden vessels of the temple, and in the midst, an artist, Brülloff himself, carrying his box of implements on his head. The picture terminates with a group of Christians, with an anachrontic chalice and censer, intended by their pious resignation and attitude of devotion to contrast with the wild, hopeless terror around. But these are the least effective of the composition.

The critics have been busy upon the redundancy of interest and the multiplication of groups which the artist has crowded together; but as these strictly unite in telling the same story, and as the interest is chiefly concentrated in the principal group, this objection does not seem more legitimate here than in any of the crowded scenes of adoration, terror, or rejoicing, those of Mr. Martin omitted, which are

familiar to the world. The more objectionable parts are the disjointed buildings on the right and left, with statues bowing forward in the act of falling, which interrupt rather than heighten the intended effect. Living objects may be given in every transient movement; the momentary flash may be pourtrayed because never viewed in any other form; the rocking billows may be imitated because seldom seen at rest; but to fix a mass of stone in a position which it can neither sustain nor the eye follow for one instant, is as much in opposition to the laws of art as to those of gravity. Otherwise the drawing is magnificent—the colouring vividly true, and the effect of light and shade, and the meretricious glow afforded by the nature of the subject, sufficient to have seduced a less masterly artist from the severity of design which Brülloff has observed. At the same time it would have been physiologically more interesting had this first Russian painter of any eminence evinced a distinctive national character, however meagre or stiff, instead of continuing in the long worn elements of the Occidental

schools. But this may be simply accounted for by the supposition, generally adopted here, that Brülloff's nationality lies only in an assumed termination to his name, after the precedents of Madame Bellochi, and M. Turnarelli, familiar to the English world; though the object here sought being precisely inverse, it is more creditable to the sense of the nation.

This picture was painted for M. Demidoff, for the sum, it is said, of 80,000 roubles, or nearly £4,000, and by him presented to his Imperial Majesty, who placed it in this Academy. Another just completed, a Crucifixion, by Brülloff, forms the altar-piece to the new Lutheran church. The body of the Saviour is splendidly drawn, but otherwise he has infused no freshness of idea into this oft-used subject—and a Predella picture below, the administration of the Sacrament, is infinitely higher in interest. Inferior, however, as this altar-piece is to his Fall of Pompeii, it is nevertheless ill bestowed; or rather it would be difficult to say what grade of merit would be compatible with this temple of abject architecture, only to be classed with

the mountebank churches of our George the First's time. Alternately Grecian and Saxon without, and painted within in a gewgaw taste, better befitting a theatre than a place of worship, this edifice unfortunately occupies a conspicuous position on the Nevski Prospect.

With this exception I hardly passed a building that did not in some way lay claim to my admiration. So much, however, has been written, and most justly so, in praise of the masonry of Petersburg, that any further comment on my part is superfluous. On the other hand, considering how our English feelings have been wounded in the reflection that most of the beautiful edifices of the olden time which adorn our capital, are placed where they can neither be approached nor appreciated, while those of the modern are allowed space and air, as if only to expose their defects, I consider that a little conscientious detraction of these northern upstarts may be more acceptable. The buildings, it is true, are with rare exception magnificent or graceful, and generally consistent in style, but as they are built

so are they left; and as neither a Russian sun nor a Russian frost can be trusted for gentle treatment, the stucco falls off, the paint blisters up, the wood-work decays, and none of these items being renewed, the edifice soon exhibits a want of finish which an English eye must lose some of its home recollections to overlook. But, habituated to the sight, no Russian eye is offended by this mixture of shabbiness and grandeur. Added to this, their houses are wretchedly *glazed* and wretchedly *shod*. Except an occasional square of plate glass, every where beautiful, not a pane is seen through which a beauty would care to be criticised; nor, beyond the Nevski, which is laid with a level mosaic pavement of wood, is there a foot of pavement in St. Petersburg which would allow you to converse in an open carriage with this same beauty in comfort. Around the winter palace it is execrable—such holes as an infant Zarowitch might be lost in; and, lest this should seem overdrawn, I can add what I myself was eye-witness to, viz:—an Ischvouschik composedly washing his droschky in a colossal

puddle, full in sight of the palace windows, after which he washed his face and hands in the same, and drove off. There remains, however, to be said, that in a country which, seven months in the year, strews the streets with a white smooth pavement of its own, the rough flag stones of art cannot be so carefully tended as elsewhere. And now, lest my pen should be deemed invidious, let us turn to the splendid granite blocks in which the Neva and all tributary streams and canals are bound; solid, polished piles which no mortar has ever defaced, being cramped together with iron: or let us acknowledge the patronage which Russia has afforded our English iron-works, which here relieve these sturdy masses with a border as elegant as it is light, while the various canals, the Fontanka, the Moika, and the St. Katherine's canal, all similar in size, and clad with the same monotony of granite, were it not for the purposedly varied designs of their graceful iron palisadings, would greatly perplex the stranger. Many of the chief noblemen's palaces are faced with cast-iron *grilles* of the

most costly workmanship, bearing the badge of oriental taste in the richly gilt arrow-head; while the palisading of the summer gardens is so renowned that the story of our countryman who came expressly from England to see it, and *immediately returned*, is here considered as a very credible piece of homage. But the many imbecilities ascribed to English travellers, by foreigners, would fill a chapter in themselves. It is a pity they are so often true.

LETTER THE FOURTH.

The Hermitage—Qualifications for sight-seeing—Promenade on the pavements of the Nevski—Disproportion of population—Duke de Leuchtenberg and Grand Duchess Marie—English Church—English Factory—Petersburg from the tower of the Admiralty—Its insecure position—High winds—A Russian marriage ceremony.

To attempt to describe in one letter a building groaning with the accumulated collections of an ambitious, unsparing, absolute, and, in some few instances, discriminating Imperial dynasty—one which would require visits of weeks in succession, and engross a volume of description, would be as vain as to pretend to comprise the British Museum in a few pages. For a detail of the far-famed Hermitage, fitting and well-named retreat for such an imperial anchorite as Catherine the Second, I must refer you to works of great length already devoted

exclusively to it, without the aid of which my own superficial view would have been of little avail. After undergoing the positive labour of viewing a palace of this description—after running through forty magnificent and glittering apartments, beyond the first ten of which the powers of attention can no longer possibly be commanded, the miserable sight-seer returns with a head swimming with the colours and forms of every school, through which the delicious Alba Madonna, by Raphael—the pale fast-worn Christ, by Leonardo da Vinci—a whole succession of valuable lights, by Rembrandt—a never-to-be-forgotten Pordennone—and, for the sake of nationality, the Infant Hercules strangling the Serpent, by our Sir Joshua, though not among the most attractive of his productions, are dimly struggling; while Dresden jars and Malachite vases—heads of Russian marshals and bodies of Thibet idols—golden trees, peacocks, owls, and mushrooms—the grown-up playthings of a semi-barbaric court; portfolios of first-rate prints—cases of gems and cameos, and whole swarms of na-

tural history, are jostling each other in hopeless confusion; all centering in the enchanting vista of Raphael's exquisite Loggie, of which a perfect fac-simile here exists, and which alone is more than enough for the time I spent there. How then can I draw light out of this chaos? No, the Hermitage must be left to those who have given, or can give, it all the requisite time. But no English heart will traverse this gallery without murmuring at the national indifference which could first allow the Houghton Collection to be transported hither, or, worse still, at the inexplicable state economy that only a few months back permitted Nicholas the First to lay his iron grasp upon a few of the finest pictures which ever entered, or certainly ever quitted the English shores—I mean those choice morsels from Mr. Coesvelt's gallery, which I last had the pleasure of seeing in his house on Carlton Terrace.

In these travelling times an inherent talent for sight-seeing is a blessing not sufficiently to be prized, one equally commendable in its exercise as in its reward. It includes many Chris-

tian virtues, and a large share of corporeal strength. It requires its possessor to be meek, long-suffering, and believing—to be patient where he feels no interest, and to deny himself where he does. To be able to watch long, fast long, and stand long, and, finally, to kiss the rod when he has done. Or, to choose another simile, sight-seeing taken in drops is a cordial, in draughts a poison. Between Baron S. and myself there is a perpetual amiable contest, as to which shall show most, or see least. He tells me that he has my future good too much at heart to mind my present fatigue, and I tell him that like many an ally he came to help, but stays to conquer. With military precision he parcels Petersburg out into districts, lays his plan of attack over-night, and the next morning to a minute he is at my door, and I am whisked off to fresh feasts, where his high epaulettes always procure admission, before the last are more than swallowed. Altogether I fear he has to do with a most thankless recruit: I wait with patience, and attend with submission, but, the morning's work over,

hasten to evaporate all newly-acquired knowledge, and compromise matters with my kind task-master by a graceless stroll on the cold sunny pavements of the Nevski.

Here it is that Russians of all garbs and ranks pass before you. Here stands the Ischvouschik, loitering carelessly beneath the trees of the avenue, who, catching your steady gaze, starts up and displays a row of beautiful teeth beneath his thickly-bearded lip, and pointing to his droschky, splutters out "Kudi vam ugodno?" or "whither does it please you?" Here stalks the erect Russian peasant, by birth a serf and in gait a prince,—the living effigy of an old patriarch,—bearded to the waist, his kaftan of sheep-skin, or any dark cloth wrapt round him, the ample front of which, confined at the waist by a belt of bright colours, contains all that another would stow in a pocket; literally portraying the words of Scripture, "full measure shall men pour into your bosom." Contrary to all established rule he wears his shirt, always blue or red, over his trowsers, his trowsers under his boots, and

doubtless deems this the most sensible arrangement. And look! here go a posse of Russian foot soldiers, with close shorn head and face, and brow-beat look, as little of the martial in their dusky attire as of glory in their hard lives, the mere drudges of a review, whom Mars would disown. Not so the tiny Circassian, light in limb and bright in look, flying past on his native barb, armed to the teeth, with eyes like loadstars, which the cold climate cannot quench. Now, turn to the slender Finn, with teeth of pearl and hair so yellow that you mistake it for a lemon-coloured handkerchief peeping from beneath his round hat; or see, among the whirl of carriages three and four abreast in the centre of the noble street, that handsome Tartar coachman, his hair and beard of jet, sitting gravely like a statue of Moses on his box, while the little postillion dashes on with the foremost horses, ever and anon throwing an anxious look behind him, lest the ponderous vehicle, which the long traces keep at half a street's distance, should not be duly following; and within lolls the pale Russian

beauty, at whose careless bidding they all are hurrying forward, looking as apathetic to all the realities of life as any other fine lady in any other country would do. These are the pastimes which the traveller finds in the streets of Petersburg, which make the hours fly swiftly by, further beguiled by the frequent question and frequent laugh, as you peep into the various magazines, listen to the full-mouthed sounds, and inhale the scent of Russian leather, with which all Petersburg is most appropriately impregnated.

No one can assert, however, that this is a gay capital, its population is one of wheels more than of men, without whose restless whirl the streets would be as lifeless as London at four o'clock in the morning. Here are no busy, noisy pedestrians, that mainspring of gaiety in other cities; and of the few who do tread her huge squares and drawn out streets not above one woman is seen to four men. It is true the court and beau monde were still at their summer haunts, but these only contribute an artificial effervescence during the

fashionable part of the day, and cannot be classed as a characteristic of activity. The imperial family are not yet returned from Zarskoe Selo to the Anitchkoff palace, their temporary residence—but, meanwhile, the great topic of the day is the arrival of the young Duke de Leuchtenberg, the fiancé of the eldest grand Duchess Marie. "Not a fine party for her," as the Bavarian Chargé d'Affaires, translating his French ideas, more candidly than correctly, observed to me; but an imperial instance of a marriage of inclination, though by some busybodies declared to be restricted to the grand Duchess.

Yesterday, being Sunday, my first drive was to the English church, an institution requiring no date to remind us that it was founded in the old time when attachment to the church was not questioned, and liberal endowments thought the wisest economy, and which now, by mainly contributing to keep up the real national spirit, makes a worthy return to the descendants of those who established it. The church itself is a splendid building on the English quay,

richly fitted up, and capable of holding a congregation of twelve hundred. The living is of considerable value, and now worthily occupied by the Rev. Ed. Law, whose residence is under the same roof with the church, with those of the clerk and sexton adjoining, all maintained on the same liberal footing. In truth, nowhere can England be seen to better advantage than in the person of the British Factory—a body of English merchants who settled here in the middle of last century,—as soon indeed, as this new capital afforded any commercial advantages, and who have firmly transplanted to this northern soil the fairest blossoms from the parent tree. Every charitable custom is perpetuated,—every hospitable anniversary celebrated—and every public rejoicing or mourning observed with jealous loyalty. The families, most of them highly aristocratic in descent, keep carefully aloof from all Russian society, and an intermarriage with a Russian is a circumstance of the rarest occurrence. At the same time this very adherence to national forms—prejudices if you

will—has procured them universal respect. It is a mistake to suppose that foreigners like us the better for imitating them. The Emperor knows that his sixteen hundred English children will always respect the existing laws, and wishes, perhaps, that the rest of his family were as peaceable. It is true they grumble a little occasionally at a new Ukase, but this is their prerogative whether abroad or at home. Owing to the English habits of business—their punctuality, exactness, and probity,—many a practical, useful institution has arisen of which the Russians equally benefit. It will be easily imagined that the straightforward English merchant, equally accustomed and compelled to trust his dependants in the various responsibilities of a counting-house, found but a slippery colleague in the merry, lazy, thieving Russian; at the same time the wages of the English to their inferiors being as much higher as their treatment was more humane, it became the interest of both parties to reform an evil which gave the one a bad servant, and deprived the other of a good master. A company,

or *artell*, as it is termed in Russian, has, therefore, been formed which pledges itself for the honesty of its members, or makes good the deficiencies which a dishonest member may occasion. The privileges and certainty of good employment are the inducement to enter, and there is not an English merchant house in Petersburg who does not employ one or more of these Artellschiks. And thus a principle, seemingly inherent in the English nature, that of making it a man's interest to be honest, has here engendered a habit which subsequently may claim a higher motive.

Upon the conclusion of service we drove to the Admiralty, the shops all open, and no sign of the sabbath, and after the due delay which accompanies all things, whether great or small, in Russia, obtained leave to ascend the tower. Emerging at the base of the gilt spire we stood among the colossal statues which adorn the platform, and were greeted with a most peculiar view. Petersburg, with its oriental spires and domes, and many tributary islands, lay couched low beneath us, while, far as the eye

could reach, spread a naked waste of land and water, each equally flat, and dotted as sparingly as possible with signs of life. The only mountainous forms were presented in a sky of arctic clouds in every variety of bright, cold colour, which, hanging over the distant walls and shipping of Cronstadt, melted imperceptibly into the horizon, and presented a back-ground as glorious as evanescent.

No one can judge of the daring position of Petersburg who has not mounted one of these her artificial heights, and viewed the immense body of waters in which she floats, like a bark overladen with precious goods; while the autumn waves, as if maddened by the prospect of the winter's long imprisonment, play wild pranks with her resistless shores, deriding her false foundations, and overturning in a few hours the laboured erections of as many years. We wanted no one to recount the horrors of an inundation, for this is the season when the waters levy their annual tribute. A south-west wind was lifting the gulf furiously towards the city—the Neva was dashing along, rejoicing

in its strength—tossing the keels of the vessels over the granite quays, disjointing the planks of the floating bridges, and threatening all who ventured across with sea sickness, if with no worse danger. The water had already taken possession of some of the wretched outskirts of the city, adding more misery where there seemed enough before, while flags floated from the tower where we stood to warn the inhabitants of their danger; and before we quitted our station, guns from the fortress, the appointed signal on such occasions, bade those remove who had aught to save. But pleasant sites and natural advantages are the easy tools of a limited monarchy—nought but an absolute will could have compelled a splendid capital from the depths of a swamp. The founding of Petersburg might be the grant of civilisation to Russia, but it was also the sign manual of autocracy, and Peter the Great reasoned more like the despot than the philantrophist, in foreseeing that wherever the Imperial Queen Bee thought fit to alight, there would the faithful or servile Russians swarm.

But now it is time to quit our station, which a thermometer at 10° of Fahrenheit rendered no enviable eminence; therefore, descending as we came, we traversed the reeling bridge in safety, and had given up all thought of further novelties for the day, when, passing the interminable Corps des Cadets—the longest façade in the known world, our attention was caught by the most delicious strains of vocal music, and observing the chapel part lighted up, and carriages waiting, Baron S. pronounced a Russian wedding to be going forward. In a moment the check-string was pulled, the horses' heads turned, and we alighted at the doorway. The chapel itself was on the second story, divided off with glass doors, which we were proceeding to open much to our satisfaction, when, with all the dignity of high integrity, the officials rushed to repulse us—not, however, till we had caught a tantalizing glimpse of a fair girl with a rueful countenance, standing before an altar, with candle in hand, as if about to light her own funeral pile, and a gentleman of no very promising exterior at her side. This

was enough to have fired the ardour of a saint, but in our hurry, bethinking ourselves only of a terrestial remedy, we applied that infallible key, fitted to all hearts as well as doors in Russia—looks of integrity vanished, smiles of bland acquiescence ensued, and, in a moment, "all the doors flew open." We entered, and mixed among the bridal party, and gradually advancing, found ourselves within a few paces of the bride, and I trust diverted her thoughts pleasantly, for the ceremony was long, and the bridegroom old enough to have been her grandfather. The ill-sorted pair stood together in the centre of the small chapel before an altar, each holding a taper as emblem of the light of their good works, and, between them and the altar, a stout burly priest with handsome jovial countenance, and fine flowing beard and hair; on either hand a subordinate. After reading prayers at some length, he gave the bridegroom a golden ring—the shining metal typifying that henceforward he should shine like the sun in his spouse's eyes; and to her one of silver, emblem of the moon, as reminding her to borrow light solely from the

favour of her husband's countenance—an admonition which in this instance seemed doubly necessary. These were exchanged amidst a profusion of bowings and crossings, the choristers, about twenty in number, dressed in the court uniform, taking up the "Ghospodi Pomilui," or "Lord have mercy on us," in strains which seemed hardly of this earth. The priest then addressed the pale girl, whom we ascertained to be an orphan, marrying for a home, in an extempore exhortation upon the duties awaiting her, with a manner so gentle and persuasive, his full Russian flowing so harmoniously from his lips, that, though not comprehending a word, my attention was rivetted and my heart touched. The bridegroom, who stood without any discernible expression whatsoever on his countenance, received the same admonition in his turn; the priest, or *pope*, as they are termed in the Russian church, alternately putting on and off his high mitred cap, which with his costly robes gave him the air of a Jewish high-priest. This concluded, the sacrament, here taken with the elements mixed, was administered, which, besides the sacred

meaning received in all Christian churches, on this occasion further typifies the cup of human joy and sorrow henceforth to be shared by a married couple. Of this each partook alternately three times, and then kissed the book on the altar. The attendants now brought forward two gilt crowns, which were received with reverence and many crossings by the priest, and two gentlemen in plain clothes advancing from the family party in which we had usurped a place, took the crowns, and the priest blessing the couple with their respective names of Anna Ivanovna and Peter Nicolaiwitch, placed the one on the man's head, and held the other over that of the girl, whose head-dress did not admit of a nearer approach. This latter, with her veil flowing from the back of her head, her long white garments, and pensive looks, seemed a fair statue beneath a golden canopy; while the poor man, encumbered with candle in one hand, the perpetual necessity of crossing himself with the other, and his stupendous head gear, looked quite a ridiculous object, and vainly attempting to bow with his body and

keep his head erect, was near losing his crown several times. In this, however, lies the pith of the ceremony—so much so that the Russian word to *marry* is literally to *crown*. This pageantry continued some time, while copious portions of the Scriptures were read, holy water strewed round, and clouds of incense flung about the pair; their saints called upon to protect them, and lastly a solemn invocation addressed to the Almighty to bless these his children like Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Joseph and Mary, &c., to keep them like Noah in the Ark, Jonas in the fish's belly, and the Hebrew captives in the fiery furnace; and, that tradition might not be omitted, to give them joy such as the Empress Helen felt on discovering the true cross. Then, taking a hand of each in his, the priest drew them, himself walking backwards, and the crown bearers following in slow procession, three times round the altar. Now the crowns were taken off, kissed three times by bride and bridegroom, the choristers ceased, the altar disappeared, and priests and attendants, retreating backwards to

the chancel end, vanished behind the screen, and all was silent in a moment.

Here you will conclude the ceremony terminated, so at least thought we, and so perhaps did the happy couple who seemed well nigh exhausted; but now the ci-devant crown bearers seized upon the bride, hurried her to the screen which divides off the Holy of Holies in a Russian church, where she prostrated herself three times in rapid succession before the pictures of two saints, touching the floor at each plunge audibly with her fair forehead, the exertion being so great that, but for the support of her attendants, she must have sunk. The gentleman was left to prostrate himself unassisted, which done each kissed the picture the requisite three times. And now the bridal party advanced to congratulate—the bride's tears flowed fast — a general kissing commenced, and we sounded a rapid retreat, for in the crowd and confusion it seemed very immaterial on whom this superabundance of caresses might alight.

It is only just to say that the whole ceremony

was highly impressive, so much so as quite to overbalance the admixture of orientalisms and traditions which pervaded it. I should also add that marriage in Russia is entirely indissoluble—that no kind of relationship within the fifth degree is permitted; two sisters may not even marry two brothers; that more than three times no one can be united in wedlock, nor even that without previous fast and penance to qualify the sin; and that a priest can never marry a second time, so that a priest's wife is as much cherished as any other good thing that cannot be replaced.

We returned home, but my thoughts involuntarily followed that pale girl whose early marriage it had been our fate to witness. I longed to whisper to her words of hope that the rough-looking staff she had chosen to lean upon through life might prove a kind and a true one. But good looks are truly nothing—l'objet qu'on aime a toujours de beaux yeux.

LETTER THE FIFTH.

Change of lodging—Corner of a dining-room—View of a Russian prison — Detention before trial — Account of the conspiracy of 1826.

UNTIL within a short time I had not been able to persuade myself to abandon the last few associations which threw an English colouring over my dwelling in the Galernoi Oulitza, or Rue des Galères, and yield to the kind solicitations of Baron S. and his amiable lady to remove entirely to their house. But now, as my time was fast drawing to a close, they came regularly to attack me. "It is no inconvenience in the world, we have plenty of accommodation," said the baroness, "and all at your service;" "We can take no denial, we have eight rooms," said the baron, "and you shall choose which

you please." And then the lady began again, and withal her very beautiful Isis-like face lighted up with such an expression of good-will and cordial kindness, that I must have been made of stone, or, what is harder still, of utter human selfishness, to have allowed the few thin ghosts of English comfort which hovered over my present dwelling to triumph o'er the pleadings of a lovely flesh and blood countenance like hers. If this be the type of female beauty here, Petersburg must be a paradise of charms; but the baroness is a German and her beauty of no individual nation, unless it be of the ancient Greek.

I surrendered, therefore, a willing prisoner, and the next day was received with one of the best attributes of our fatherland, viz., an English welcome. "And now," said the baron, his pale face glowing with hospitality, "here are eight apartments; select which you please for your sleeping-room. Here are the two drawing-rooms, there the dining-room; there," pointing to the right, "is my wife's cabinet; there," pointing to the left, "is my own writ-

ing-room; further on is our bed-room; in short you have only to choose, and never was a guest more welcome." By the tardiness of my answer my kind host doubtless thought that I was inclined to be difficult in my choice; so drawing-rooms, dining-room, dressing-room, writing-room, sleeping-room, and even children's-room, and I know not what beside, were duly recapitulated, and still their guest hesitated. Could they but have looked into my heart and seen the spacious vision of eight spare bed-rooms, all fitted up with English privacy, which to that moment had occupied it, my silence would have no longer puzzled them. After all I was not so new to foreign habits, but that I might have suspected the truth; so hastily considering what would be furthest from the children, furthest from the soldiers, and most to myself, I modestly selected the dining-room. Accordingly, when I entered for the night I found an ample corner partitioned off by a screen, all my things arranged in order, and, if the chief ingredient of a good night be sound sleep, I had no reason to complain.

In his high military post Baron S. is unremittingly occupied, for business is not considered such in Russia without an incredible consumption of paper and ink, and all his spare time, when he has no guests to whom to show the lions of his capital, is spent in his little family of infant beauties.* The two youngest, twins, were brought in by their Russian wet-nurse, who, with her high velvet cap embroidered with gold, came in for her share of my traveller's privilege, and was considered with as much interest as the babes. These latter were still imprisoned in the bandages with which they continue to impede children's circulation and keep down the population of this country. The only convenience, perhaps, consists in a facility of handling them as long as they are alive. The colonel held one upright in one hand; its little head

* Since writing the above Colonel and Baroness S. have experienced an affliction which has given them a mournful reputation in Petersburg; the scarlet fever, the scourge of this capital, having swept off five of their six children in four weeks' time.

nodding about like a fading flower on a stiff stalk—"*après tout, c'est une barbarie,*" said he, "*mais on a fait le même avec moi;*" and this was, perhaps, the best reason that could be given.

From this scene we removed to a very different one. This building, in which the colonel is allowed those memorable eight rooms, and which is entirely under his charge, is one of the principal military establishments in Petersburg; containing barrack-room for a standing force of twelve hundred men, and strong prisons for offenders of every kind, who are here secured and tried, and then passed on to various other governments for punishment. I accompanied the colonel to the chief prison, entering an ante-chamber where twenty soldiers kept guard before a grate of iron stanchions from floor to ceiling, and which led into a spacious apartment crowded with inmates. We entered, and the colonel uttered the military salute, "*Sdărova li?*" "All well?" and was answered with "*Sdravie gelaiem,*" or "we wish you good health;" the equally national military

answer in a simultaneous shout. Here were one hundred and four criminals, or rather prisoners, for trial, but all with crime pretty legible on their countenances. Those apprehended for murder were chained hand and foot, and at least a fifth of the number were thus fettered. All nations and tribes of Russia were congregated here, Tartars, Finns, Calmucs, Bukharians, Circassians, &c., all wretched, vitiated looking beings, many fine in feature but hideous in expression. The most remarkable was an Arabian prince, a plunderer of the desert, fine, handsome, haughty, and hardened, a very Thug in impenitent expression, who drew up his fine figure as we passed along, and clanked his murderer's chains as proudly as if they had been the insignia of honour. It has not been at all times safe to enter this den, and the last fort-major, whose guard at the grate was neither so numerous nor so vigilant, narrowly escaped with his life. The room was long, large, and lofty, well aired, and lighted by a row of strongly barred sash-windows; at the one end were two pumps, with brass basins beneath

them, for the purification of the body, and at the opposite end a Russian shrine with ever-burning lamp, for that of the soul. Down the centre of the room was a wooden frame-work, sloping each way like the shallow roof of a house, on which their coverlets were spread for the night; and the room was clean, being washed by the prisoners once a week. All other admissible humanity is also exercised, and, that I might not tell England that the prisoners under his care were neglected, the colonel sent for a basin of soup from the prisoners' supper, and truly it was such as a more squeamish stomach might have relished.

But the great evil is, that all this is too much in the power of the commanding officer to pervert and abuse, who, being himself entirely without check or control, too often starves his prisoners to increase his own poor pay. The rank of a general, I am sorry to add, does not here pledge its owner to honesty, and it is well known and as frankly acknowledged that the *chef* of a regiment will with impunity defraud his soldiers of their allowed

weight of rations, and pocket the surplus, or market them out to daily labour, of which he himself appropriates the wages. For here the individual who wears the emperor's livery is denied the pride of knowing that he is absolved from that of any other master, and every soldier, who will, learns a trade, with the profits of which he endeavours to better his miserable condition. The best shoemakers, tin-men, basket-makers, &c., are soldiers. Imagine an English hotel-keeper sending to the royal barracks for a soldier to hang his bells; but such I have seen done here.

Besides these promiscuous prisons there are also solitary cells in this establishment for prisoners whose cause is of a more intricate nature. None, the baron assured me, he believed to be unjustly punished, but the cruelty here consists in the length of detention before trial. Frequently a prisoner waits two years before his trial comes on. There was one in a room above us, he said, who had been detained *twelve years*; "*mais, pauvre homme, que faire! —il a un tas de papiers haut comme cela,*" and

the colonel stretched his arms to their utmost limit. Thus it appears, taking this maximum of misery, and our late minimum of inconvenience, that the paper-mills in Russia are the engines which work the greatest evils to all classes; a new species of abuse of the press! The emperor's attention is however particularly devoted to this subject, which, it is to be hoped, may soon be remedied, and paper and ink no longer remain the tyrants they now are.

'From Colonel S. I have received a most interesting account of the rebellion which greeted Nicholas's accession to the throne, on the 14th of December, 1826, an historical occurrence of which we know but little, and than which few events have left deeper traces of their existence in public mistrust and private misery. As other means have put into my hands some valuable documents relating to the same, I am enabled to give an account which I think will be interesting, and which may serve also to show the materials of which most plots are here composed.

As early as 1816, among the troops return-

ing to Russia upon the conclusion of peace, were a few young officers, who, having become acquainted with the political tendency of various secret associations in Germany, and fired with ideas, then less guilty than romantic, resolved upon establishing something similar in Russia. To these raw beginners others quickly joined themselves, and in February, 1817, the basis was laid of an association called "The Society of the Public Good." One of the chief members was a Colonel Pestel, aide-de-camp to Count Witgenstein, who, being distinguished for talent and strength of character, was intrusted with the formation of a code of rules. These, had their right or their power in any way been adapted to the end proposed, would doubtless have been of great public benefit, being principally directed towards the encouragement and maintenance of charitable institutions, to the formation of schools on the Lancastrian principles, to the better administration of justice in the courts of law (that most crying of all public abuses in Russia), and to the development of national industry, and attain-

ment of commercial prosperity. On the other hand, these benevolent statutes included the vows of a blind obedience, and the liberty of resorting to the most violent means, even "to the secret dagger and the secret cup." To the maintenance of the society each member was to subscribe the twentieth part of his income, a condition which none seemed particularly anxious to fulfil, since at no time does it appear that a sum of more than 5,000 roubles, about 200*l.*, was collected, which was spent by Prince Troubetskoi, secretary to the body, but *not* for the service of the same. This association rapidly grew in strength, but with their numbers increased also their factions, and all their sittings were characterised by disorder and want of integrity.

It was not long before a false report of a design on the part of the Emperor Alexander to re-establish the kingdom of Poland, and retire with his court to Warsaw, gave rise to violent commotions, and to the first open project of regicide, and more than one member volunteered his arm for the deed. This bravado,

however, frightened the more prudent or timid, and many subsequent convocations leant towards the republican form of government, to the banishment of every member of the imperial family, or to the retention of the Empress Elizabeth, Alexander's wife, alone, as head of a limited monarchy. Occasionally their thoughts were devoted to the form of constitution best adapted to their views, at one sitting selecting England as a model, at another, Spain, and at a third, America! and having become acquainted with the existence of a powerful secret body in Poland, they mutually communicated their plans; the Society of the Public Good binding themselves to acknowledge the independence of Poland, and to restore those conquered provinces, according to their phrase, "*not yet Russified;*" whilst the Polish body promised to abet every movement of its colleague, and to withhold the Grand Duke Constantine, Viceroy of Warsaw, from returning to Russia on any outburst of the conspiracy. A further re-inforcement was furnished by the discovery of another society in

Russia, entitled, "The United Slavonians;" thus verifying the Russian proverb, that "those who work in the dark have light enough to know their own." These combined forces, though subdivided into numerous garrisons, and scattered about the empire, were nevertheless designated in general as the Societies of the North and of the South; the former comprising Petersburg, the latter Moscow, Toulczyn, &c.; of which latter, Pestel, mentioned above, the most dangerous member because the most resolute, one whom even his companions looked on with fear as "an ambitious, designing man," — "a Buonaparte and not a Washington," was the head. In the mean time the conspiracy included the most celebrated names, either in family or fame, in Russia; such as the Princes Troubetskoi, Obolensky, Baryatinski, Volkonski, Galitzin, &c.; the names of Narischkin, Tolstoi, Rosen, Mouravieff, four of them, Bulgarin, Bestucheff the author, &c. &c. To affirm that these were all military is useless in a country where to be a man is to be a soldier, and every means were

employed to prepare for a struggle, by spreading disaffection among the soldiery, who, to do them justice, were only turned from their duty by an artful misrepresentation of the same, or by a direct fabrication of the emperor's orders: while Bestucheff, one of Russia's first writers, employed his pen in publishing seditious and exciting poems and addresses.

Proceeding thus from one extreme to another, each fresh meeting of the conspirators gave birth to wilder schemes of government, all pointing at self-aggrandisement in various shapes, while, with brutal *sang froid*, the imperial family were condemned to a general massacre;—Pestel coolly counting on his fingers up to thirteen necessary murders, adding, "I will prepare the bravos to deal the blows; Baryatinski has several ready." With their blood-thirstiness, however, their disorders kept pace; almost every sitting terminating in dissensions which nullified their resolves; and thus, under God's Providence, the Emperor Alexander slept safe in his bed though a traitor not seldom mounted guard at his door. For

it is remarkable, that, of several who assumed the night watch at the palace expressly for the purpose of murdering the emperor in his sleep, not one was found capable of carrying this plan into execution. From time to time, it is believed, intelligence of this plot reached him, but weary with the weight of a Russian diadem, and careless of his own life, he gave the subject no attention. In the June preceding his death, however, these reports (deserters from the cause not being wanting) assumed too responsible a shape to be neglected, and at Taganrog, whence he never returned, precautionary means were taken, which, while they did not in the least intimidate, served but to aggravate the party. The event of Alexander's death was lamented by some of the conspirators, as an opportunity for open revolt lost never to be recovered; by others, as having frustrated plans of private revenge.

In the mean time the 14th of December approached. This was the day appointed for administering the oaths of fidelity to the troops in favour of Nicholas, who acceded to the

throne, not less by the wish of Alexander than by the voluntary renunciation of Constantine. This latter circumstance, however, was grasped as a pretext for disaffecting the soldiers. "Although their plans were as unripe as ever they had been, or probably would have been, and but a small number of the sworn assembled in Petersburg, yet a rising for that day was hastily resolved on, and Prince Troubetskoi elected as the chief. The disaffected officers ran through the ranks, urging the soldiers not to take the oath to Nicholas, alleging that the Grand Duke Constantine was in irons, the Grand Duke Michael the same; and that the former would increase the pay of all who remained faithful to him. Cries of "Constantine and the Constitution," were raised—the latter word, new to every Russian ear, and perfectly unintelligible to the simple soldiery, was explained to them as meaning Constantine's wife!—and a more biting sarcasm could not have been uttered. Arriving in this condition at the Grand Square, and beneath the windows of the Winter Palace, where the Em-

press, with her whole court, were assembled, the revolt became apparent. Count Miloradewitch and Colonel Stürler, colonels of two regiments which refused to obey their orders, were both assassinated in cold blood by Kahowsky, one of the most brutal of the conspiracy. The Grand Duke Michael, also, narrowly escaped with life. One moment of fear or irresolution on the part of the Crown had turned the day, as it has done before now in Russia; but the conspirators had mistaken their man. Nicholas stood forth in a character which he had never before had occasion to show. Firm to his rights, and dauntless in personal courage, he strengthened the bravery of the faithful, and inspired many a wavering heart with instantaneous enthusiasm for his person. The rebels fought with desperation, but their numbers were few—their chief had dastardly abandoned his post, or, rather, had never appeared at it; and after a few rounds of cannon had been discharged, this long-fermenting conspiracy, which had formed visions alternately of liberty and dominion, which

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had projected the restorations of kingdoms and the foundation of republics, which had promised provinces and places, and had anticipated bringing the proud Nicholas to conditions, if not to utter submission, was quelled before night, with nothing remaining but mistrust in the bosom of the sovereign, and disgrace upon half the noble families in the empire. Now began the painful task of investigation. Every day brought forth fresh convictions, and proofs strong as daylight branded many as guilty, of whom the merest suspicion would have been deemed calumny. But no means had been neglected to secure adherents. Wives had misled their husbands, brothers their brethren.

The commission seems to have been conducted with great justice and indulgence; and, contrary to the usual custom of Russia, who, not content with cutting off the head of the hydra, generally sears all remembrance also with the utmost care, a summary of its proceedings was published. In all, one hundred and twenty-three were adjudged worthy of punishment.

These were divided into twelve categories, of whom the first, five in number, including Pestel and Kahowsky, were hanged; the second degraded and banished for life to Siberia, with hard work in the mines; others degraded, with a certain portion of hard labour and exile in proportion to their guilt; whilst the twelfth class were sentenced to serve as common soldiers with power of promotion. Most of their wives and families followed the exiled; and it is reported that the colony of nobility, which this rebellion transplanted to Siberia, are living there in great comfort, their labour being little more than nominal; subscribing among themselves for all the periodicals, newspapers, and new works, which appear in the European world, and piquing themselves on the exclusive aristocracy of their circle. But this had better not be looked closer into, or, much as the guilty are to be compassionated, our ideas of right and wrong would be rather shocked at an evasion in execution of sentence, which proceeds neither from the repentance of the subject, nor the clemency of the monarch.

With respect to the latter, however, many of the sentences have been mitigated, and some are already returned to their homes, bearing nevertheless the badge of the past in their coarse privates' uniform and other degrading restrictions.

It is worthy of note that an Englishman, or one English descended, of the name of Sherwood, was the individual who more especially betrayed the conspiracy to Alexander, though unfortunately from no motive beyond revenge, having been degraded in the army for some misdemeanour. He afterwards received a pension, and the unmerited name of Sherwood *vernoi,* or Sherwood the Faithful.

My kind friend, Baron S., owes his elevation to that day; the murdered Colonel Stürler was his brother-in-law, and he himself is indebted for his life to the intervention of a friend's arm.

LETTER THE SIXTH.

Detention in Petersburg—The Petersburg malady—Preparations for Northern travel — Journey to Narva — Troubles there—Entrance into Estonia—Intense cold—Wolves—The station-house Loop—Arrival in Reval.

Der mensch denkt, und Gott lenkt; l'homme propose et Dieu dispose. The third week in October had been fixed for me to quit Petersburg, and November was far advanced ere I eventually turned my back on it. I had closed my volume of sight-seeing; I had quitted my tent in the corner of that friendly dining-room; and had returned to the English boarding-house in order to start by the last pyroskaff for Reval, when I suddenly fell under that penalty—a kind of invisible Douane in the air—to which all southern-born sojourners in

Petersburg sooner or later must submit. For it is a disagreeable fact, that no foreigner becomes seasoned to the exhalations of this swamp-based capital, without paying entrance-fee in the shape of an attack of fever more or less acute. Some impeach the air, others the Neva, others the food; but in my own case I am inclined to ascribe it to a too careless defence against the cold, already piercingly severe, and which disguised beneath the rays of a bright and steady sun takes a novice to the climate completely unawares. May every lonely traveller be half as well tended, for the kindest of English Samaritans and the best of English physicians were around me, and, ere I forget either, "may my right hand forget its cunning." In a few days I experienced no further inconvenience than that attending an active mind and a passive body, for "strength leaves us in pounds, but returns in drachms," and an unfeigned contrition for being so little mindful of the blessings of health while undisputedly mine. Meanwhile it had become no easy matter to reach Reval,

my destination, for the last pyroskaff had ceased; diligences never had existed: the bad season, when autumn's last wind and rain touch the confines of the winter's first snow,—what, in other words, is here termed "the little winter,"—had commenced; and a journey of three hundred miles, through a strange country and strange language, wore a discouraging aspect. But faint hearts must stay at home. In a short time a Russian man-servant, trusty and responsible, though no Artellschik, was found willing to escort a lady to Reval who could only sit still in the carriage, and not so much as speak for herself. So he was brought up for my approbation, and proved to be a brisk-looking, moustached little fellow, who, knowing no language beyond his own, gazed on me as I sat propped in my fauteuil, with an air of compassion, as if to say, "I'll take care of you, poor thing!" and was very eloquent to everybody else.

And now, by the advice of the experienced, our measures were hastened; for a frost had set in, which promised to carry away all float-

ing bridges 'twixt Petersburg and Reval; after which a period ensues when travelling ceases, and even the islands forego all communication with the main body of Petersburg for at least a fortnight.

What is there about this capital which renders it so unloveable as a residence? I had experienced within its walls kindness as much beyond my expectations as my deserts—not only courtesy and hospitality, but real genuine Christian goodness, and I turned away with a feeling of thankfulness that my life was not destined to be spent there. It seems as if the soil, revenging itself for having been taken by force, and appropriated to a purpose Nature never intended, inspires a sense of dreariness and loneliness which can hardly be rationally accounted for. I never read or heard of the English traveller, sojourning beyond a few days, who did not quit Petersburg with a sentiment of release from bondage; and many a Russian, long resident abroad, whose darling vision by day and night it has been to retire to his native capital with the fruits of his ex-

patriation, has, upon experiment, owned the disappointment, and ended his days elsewhere. "Je deteste Petersbourg" is the thankless sentence you hear from every mouth.

Our journey commenced at six in the afternoon of the nineteenth of November, a delay until daybreak being deemed highly hazardous. Anton on the box, and myself, loaded with as many clothes as a southlander would wear up in the course of a long life, nestled down comfortably in the calêche with as little inclination as power to stir. My light English straw hat had been banished by unanimous consent, and a close, silk, wadded cap, edged with fur, substituted. My English-lined fur cloaks had been held up to derision as mere cobwebs against the cold, and a fox-fur, the hair long as my finger, drawn over them. All my wardrobe had been doubled and trebled, and even then my friends shook their heads and feared I was too thinly clad. Thus we sallied forth into the wild waste of darkness and snow, in which Petersburg lay, travelling with four post-horses but slowly through the unsound snowed-up roads,

which were, nevertheless, not in the condition to admit of a sledge. Near midnight I alighted at the second post-house from Petersburg, the stages being on the average twenty-five wersts long, with four wersts to three miles. It was a fine building outwardly, but otherwise a mere whitened sepulchre. Here the superintendant of the post-stables, not being able to settle matters with Anton to mutual satisfaction, obtruded his fine person into my apartment, and bowing gracefully, and with many a commanding gesture, poured forth a torrent of words of the utmost melody and expression. He was a perfect patriarch: his fresh sheepskin caftan and rich flowing beard curling round a head of the loftiest Vandyke character, unbaring, as he spoke, a set of even, gleaming teeth, and lighted to advantage by a flaring lamp which hung above. I was in no hurry to interrupt him. Finding his eloquence not to the purpose he wanted, he left me with fresh gestures of the grandest courtesy to attack my obdurate servant, who loved *copecks* better than he did the picturesque.

Reseated with fresh horses and lulled by the musical jingle of our post-bells, I dozed with tolerable comfort during the night, and opened my eyes with daybreak to a perfect Esquimaux landscape,—boundless flats of snow, low hovels of wood, and peasants gliding noiselessly past on their tiny sledges. At twelve we reached Jamburg, an empty, rambling town of large crown barrack buildings and miserable little houses, with here and there a bright Quentin Matsys-looking head, peeping at the equipage through the dull double glass. Here all restless doubts relative to the existence of a bridge were to terminate, and, in a fever of anxiety, I descended a hill which led to the river Luga. There it lay before me, broad, rapid, and dark; great masses of loose ice sulkily jostling each other down its current, but bridge—none at all. My heart sunk. Jamburg was but little inviting for a fortnight's residence, when, upon inquiry, a ferry was found to be plying with greater difficulty and greater risk at every transport, and this would have ceased in a few hours. Peasants with their carts and

cattle stood on the bank awaiting their turn, and after much delay and a profuse exchange of *tchorts*, literally, devil, in which these Russians are most liberal, and which seems destined to be the first word I retain, our promiscuous-laden ferry-boat ground slowly through the stiffening ice, and at length touched the opposite shores. Here, having abandoned our old horses on the other side, Anton went off to search for fresh ones, and I was left sitting in the carriage for above an hour, among a set of swearing, merry beings, who seemed bent alternately on quarreling and laughing. The banks of the Luga are very pretty, though desolate; high rocks, with a scanty vegetation creeping among them. When fresh horses arrived, their first task was to drag us up a hill of unusual steepness, whence, as far as Narva, was one uninterrupted plain. In Narva, which I reached about five o'clock, after a little difficulty we found the house to which I had been recommended by a friend, a rambling edifice of unpainted wood, all on the ground floor. I entered a suite of rooms, and caught sight of

various female shapes receding before me in the same proportion as I advanced, until, having gained the apartment conventionally dedicated to the ceremony of reception, they all faced about, and came bowing and curtesying forward to receive me.

Let me be exonerated from the charge of ingratitude in what I am about to say; but in the house where I now received the outward rites of hospitality, the curiosity excited by the novelty of an English guest, the vanity of showing off an English lion, was so far paramount to every other consideration, that ere I quitted it, my debt of obligation had been pretty well cancelled. I was ill,—tired,—a stranger,—but it mattered not; my advent in this little *Krähwinkel* was too great a wonder to be neglected. Before I had been there an hour, visitors crowded in to see me, and first an old lady catechised me, and then a vulgar officer, who from the abundance of his mouth bombarded the store and floor around, instructed me; imparting between every fresh volley various items of information relative to

English customs and manners; our queen's beauty, matrimonial intentions, &c., in all of which he was so perfectly satisfied with his own authority, that I ventured no expostulation. All this time my hostess was in a flutter of importance, and, whenever my answers appeared deficient, filled them up so readily, that I found I could safely leave the task of my biography in her hands. She subtracted some years from my age; she added some thousands of roubles to my rental, placing me, with a delicacy worthy a better occasion, in this respect on a par with the grandees of her own land; and then, with a sigh, she ejaculated, "Poor young creature! so ill too!" "The dysentery," exclaimed three voices; "No, typhus fever," said a fourth; "All the English have it when they travel," cried a fifth; and so on, till I had full occupation in listening. All this would have been very amusing at another time, but I longed for quiet, and had a buz of voices and glare of lights around me; I longed for rest, and was planted upright in a hard chair, which was exactly convex where

it ought to have been concave. I looked back on my quiet carriage with affectionate regret, and wished myself seated in it, and continuing my journey.

Having, with the assistance of my watch and my very slender Slavonic vocabulary, contrived to make Anton understand that we were to start at eight the next morning, and having now borne this examination and exhortation for several hours, I began to consider how I should best sound a retreat from the circle of my spectators, I cannot say audience. At the first indication the whole rose in arms. They had not half enjoyed my company. Besides, supper was coming in, and forthwith my hostess enumerated one greasy dish after another, with various amalgamations of reputed English origin. May I be forgiven for inwardly shuddering as I thought of my late diet of sago and rice-pudding. And now, being thus far, though it was evident my conduct was the most flagrant breach of Narva decorum ever known, I persisted, being hardly able to stand, on retiring to rest, and at last

broke through the ring. The next morning, by half-past eight, no carriage was visible; nine o'clock, half-past nine came, and still Anton appeared not; and now I elucidated that, in the hopes of my being induced to meet another select circle that evening, my hostess had remanded my carriage *sine die*. Good woman! how little she guessed my thoughts. I thanked her in my heart for having taught me to prefer on a future occasion the meanest tavern, where rest and privacy could be commanded, to the equivocal hospitality of a friend's friend; but nothing should have induced me to stay an hour under her roof longer than was necessary. Curiosity and indelicacy may be terms differing in different countries, but there were a few objections, I need not specify here, which are much the same everywhere. By eleven o'clock I left Narva, and, for the first half-werst, Anton, turning round on his seat, was very voluble in self-vindication, in which I could catch the words *stara barina*, or old lady, in deprecatory tones at every third word; and

having thus eased his conscience, resumed silence.

We had now entered Estonia; the landscape was undulating and wooded, and towards evening a high line of ocean-horizon and a faint sound of waves showed me we were skirting a cliff of considerable eminence. The appearance of our horses also kept pace with the improved condition of the country. They were beautiful sleek animals, small and graceful, sometimes four cream colours, sometimes four blacks, who started with fire, never abated their speed, and pawed the ground with impatience when the five and twenty wersts were run. How they were harnessed, or how the animals contrived to keep their places in the shifting tag and rag which danced about them, was quite an enigma. No less so the manœuvre, more puzzling than any conjuror's trick of my childhood, by which a little urchin, by one strong pull at a ragged rope, disengaged all four horses at once. Meanwhile the basket of provisions, which kind friends had filled for me at Petersburg, rose to my imagination in most

tempting colours, and about three o'clock I alighted at a station-house of no very promising exterior. Anton peeped into a room on the right, and shook his head; into one on the left, and repeated the gesture; each was filled with smoke from a party of noisy carousers. The host coming forward, I asked, —for here German was a passport—for an "*ordentliches Zimmer*," a decent room, in which I could dine; when, looking round at his filthy floors, rickety chairs, and smoking guests, he answered, with a shrug, "*was können sie mehr verlangen?*" "what can you wish for more?" I very nearly laughed in his face; but the occupants, with more tact, observing that I should prefer solitude, all adjourned to the other room.

The next stage we completed by six o'clock, when I found good tea and a pretty woman, who, presuming on her good looks, began to catechise me, after the Narva fashion, upon my comings and goings. She also informed me that his imperial majesty, on one of his self-imposed forced marches, had passed through but a few weeks back on a common

Telega, or post-cart, and had slept two hours on the sofa where I was now stretched. The stage following this included a stream, generally fordable, but now impassable. To secure, therefore, the aid of a stone-bridge, we had to make a detour over wretched roads, which lengthened the way to thirty-seven wersts. It was midnight ere this was completed, and eager to proceed, and loathing the post-houses, — for the traveller through these regions must be placed, if not above the standard of humanity, certainly below those of our native land,—I incautiously began another stage. The atmosphere now began to sharpen, and, from being very cold, became still and intense. A thick fog also filled the air, and Anton, nestling his head into the depths of his furs, sat before me like a pillar of salt. I felt my warmth gradually ebbing away, my breath congealed on my face, eyelashes and eyebrows hung in fringes of icicles, and a tell-tale tear of anxiety froze on my cheek. How severely did I reproach myself for having proceeded and exposed horses and men to such inclemency.

Meanwhile we were traversing an open plain skirted by forests, and from time to time the silence of the night was broken by a moaning, snarling, drawn-out cry, which fell dismally on the ear. I listened in vain conjecture, when a piercing whine within one hundred yards of us made me lean forward, and Anton, remarking the movement, composedly articulated "*Volki*," wolves. Had the word been less similar, I believe I should have sprung to the conclusion, and chilling still colder at these evidences of a savage neighbourhood, of which we seemed the only human occupants, I longed more impatiently than ever for the friendly dwellings of man. At length we reached the station-house, and, grown less dainty, I entered instantly, and stumbled over a peasant on the floor, who rising, stupid with sleep, drew a green, long-wicked candle out of its filthy socket, and thrust it thus into my hand; and then, passing on through a room where lay two military men stretched on leather benches, and another shapeless mass on the floor, as unconcernedly as if they had

been so many slumbering infants, I penetrated, under Anton's guidance, to an untenanted room beyond. Here my brisk attendant, who seemed most tenderly solicitous for my comfort, warmed my carriage-cushions at the stove, and then disposing them as he deemed most temptingly on the wretched sofa, left me literally to repose. For, oppressed with cold and fatigue of mind and body, sleep fell instantly on me.

And now that the weary body lay like a senseless log, reckless of the two thousand miles which separated it from the place of its birth, the soul bounded free over space and time; and before me was an open doorway, and within it, gazing earnestly upon me, stood the form of one long lost; and grasping forward to seize the well-known hand, my own fell on the damp wrappers in which I lay; while a faint prismatic hue on the eastern horizon, struggling through the dull double panes, outshone the failing taper at my side. After that face 'twas vain to think of sleep. My watch told me that two hours were miss-

ing during those few minutes that I seemed to rest, and, scattering sparks behind me, I went to search for Anton. In the neighbouring chamber of drowsiness all was much as I left it, save that the shapeless mass had reared itself aloft, and now stood, a giant figure, leaning fast asleep against the stove. I stood in the midst, and held my slender taper aloft, searching with peering eyes, through this hall of Circe, for the figure of Anton. At the further end a door seemed to lead to utter darkness. I bowed my head as I passed through the low portal into a little den, where lay a figure beneath a coverlet. Hardened by circumstances, I pulled the covering from the sleeper's face, and held my light to his eyes; but a different pair than Anton's opened on me, and, hoping to pass for a vision, I rapidly retreated, and was retiring in despair to my own haunt, when he emerged from the opposite side.

And again our bells jingled more cheerily to daylight and renovated spirits. The fog vanished, the sun rose cloudless, and groves of

birch-trees drooped gracefully beneath thin veils of glistening hoar-frost hanging like fairies in tissue robes among them,—

> "While every shrub, and every blade of grass,
> And every pointed thorn, seem'd wrought in glass."

We were now within ninety wersts of Reval, and thoughts and conjectures rose unbidden, and sweet visions of affection, cloudless as that sun, and with them affection's inseparable shadow—fear. For the day at length had dawned, for years so wistfully anticipated—the day that had been looked to through change and through sorrow—how would it terminate? Now that hope was yielding to certainty, suspense seemed more intolerable than ever. In vain philosophy and reason interfered to silence needless fear; they were dismissed to comfort themselves with their own elements, and the heart persisted in fluttering on its own way.

Our next station-house looked more tempting than any we had passed; two old elms, Baucis and Philemon-like, stood at the door; the windows were bright and clear, the floor

clean and fresh sanded, and in the corner stood a dear familiar object, a regular eight-day clock—"Thomas Hunter, Fenchurch-street." I could have worshipped it. The mystery was cleared by a few words of broken English, which fell hesitatingly from the lips of a burly, blushing host. He had spent some months in England twenty years before, and had he denied the fact, his habits would have borne witness to it: for the table was neatly spread, water and towels placed; and his face glowed a brighter red when I told him his little house was as comfortable as an English one. White bread there certainly was none, so Anton thawed my stiff Petersburg loaves, and mine host toasted them in the English fashion. The name of this station was *Loop*.

Once more I resumed my position, which, probably from the lassitude still hanging about me, was rather refreshing than wearisome, and we plunged into a forest-road—the trees, chiefly Scotch firs, sometimes brushing the vehicle, sometimes opening into irregular glades white with snow, which lasted for miles and tens of

miles. The werst-posts were now watched with progressing eagerness, and now they told fifty wersts from Reval, and soon twenty-five. Here was again a short stop, and holding up the bottle, Anton showed me the sherry frozen through. What a night that had been! According to my host's information at Loop, eighteen degrees of cold, Réaumur.* The country was now one monotonous plain of snow, broken only by the black and white werst-posts, and by heaps of stones placed at distances to indicate the line of road. And evening gathered quickly round us, but still my eyes refused to rest, and soon they spied a high line of distant ocean, and then, dim and indistinct, appeared spires and towers, their utmost points tipped with the last reflection of the departing sun. This was Reval. I felt my eyes fill and my face glow. What would I not have given for a friend—a servant—a child—a dunce—the meanest creature breathing—to whom I could have uttered the words that seemed to choke me! But a snow-storm swept

* About eleven degrees below zero, Fahrenheit.

the vision away, and all was gloomy darkness. We now descended a steep hill, and scattered houses lay thick along the road, and I sat leaning forward, and watching like one who, returned to his native home, seeks some well-known token at every turn. But what or who had I in this strange land but one object, herself a home, who deemed not of the fevered heart that was hurrying to meet hers?

We crossed a drawbridge; we passed through guardhouse and soldiers; we traversed one narrow dark street after another, and then the horses rushed up a steep hill between two high walls, and stopped before a house in the square above. In a moment I was upstairs, a door opened, and between me and the light behind stood a slight figure. . . . . .

Need I to tell the failing heart and paralysed limbs with which we stand on the threshold of that moment which hope has fed on and fond fancy rehearsed for years and years ere it arrives? or need I to tell the blissful agony of that meeting—joy too much for the poor heart to hold—the dearly-earned fruits of cruel sepa-

ration—the life remembered in a moment—the moment remembered for life? Yet who would wish to pay the heavy penalty—to fast for years for one delicious draught? How good it is that our fates are not in our own guidance—that the lot is cast into the lap, but the ordering thereof not dependant on us!

That night the weary traveller slept safe from the world's harms beneath a sister's roof, and waking the next morning, "found the vision true."

LETTER THE SEVENTH.

Unlocking hearts, and unpacking trunks—Domiciliation in a new land—Removal into the country—Splendour of residence — Every-day routine — Cuisine — Schafferei—Duties of Estonian ladies—The Volkstube—Spinning and weaving departments—A bride's dowry—Mode of heating houses—Farming buildings—Greenhouses.

How much two people have to talk about between whom no reserve exists, and who first unlock the accumulated hoards of long years of separation! It might naturally be imagined they would begin with those subjects nearest their parting, and thus come downwards; but no, they invariably commence with those nearest their meeting, and so work upwards. For memory allows of no short cut by which to slip round to that sanctum you are seeking, but compels those who wander through her regions to

pursue a retrograding motion, to open one cell after another as they offer themselves in succession, till that one is reached where the memory of another joins on with yours. And in the case of two individuals long sundered there is a double reason for this process, for, both equally changed by time, were they at once to leap to the spot whence each took a different route they would hardly recognise one another.

And then there are all the treasures of luggage to examine—those troublesome accompaniments of humanity which ought to yield a double harvest of pleasure now, for they have caused anxiety and detention enough upon the road. In the first fever of curiosity and communicativeness, therefore, the floor is strewed with boxes and trunks—all opened, but none emptied, while little meddlesome fairies—those terribly irrefutable evidences of the lapse of years—dive their tiny fingers into every recess, and one little shrill voice exclaims, "*Was ist diess?*" and another "*Was ist das?*" till the owner has to give a catalogue raisonné of her

goods, and they, in their enviable simplicity, generally admire that which is least worth having.

But now, if we would avoid a second custom-house conglomeration, we must shut the door on these little well-known strangers—on these small unread editions of a dear and familiar type—and consign the task of putting to rights, evening out, and folding up, to two mild-looking Estonian maids, with high helmet-shaped caps, short waists, and striped petticoats, who smile and nod as they pass to and fro with light steps, and occasionally exchange some low remark of admiration on the treasures of an English wardrobe.

What a world of boundless novelty opens on the individual who finds himself suddenly thrown into the innermost home life of an hitherto strange people! In general the traveller is left, and most justly so, to wear his way gradually into the privacy of other nations, and by the time he has attained some knowledge of their habits, has somewhat blunted the edge of his own. This is the most natural course, and also the fairest, otherwise the same

individual who is at once thrust into the lights and shadows of one country, ere the retina of his understanding has lost the images of another, and who, in many instances, is placed in situations in the new home which he never tried in the old, runs the risk of being very open-eyed to other people's foibles and prejudices, and most comfortably blind to his own. We are such creatures of habit that it is difficult to judge of the inner system of a foreign land, otherwise than too severely, till after several months of observation, nor otherwise than too favourably, after as many years. But the reverse is applicable to the hasty traveller whose time and opportunity enable him only to view the outer shell—to scan that which all who run can read. His perceptive powers can hardly be too fresh, nor his judgment too crude, upon those things whose existence lies but in the novelty of his impressions. Like *soufflets*, they must be served hot, and eaten hastily, to be rightly tasted. The breath of cool reason would ruin them. Being, however, much in the same situation as the traveller first supposed,

and under the same risk of mental purblindness, the delay of a few weeks, which intervenes since my last letter, must be considered as only justice to both parties.

A few days after my arrival we removed into the country, a day's journey through a richly-wooded landscape, and arrived in the evening before a grand crescent-shaped building, recalling in size and form the many-tenemented terraces of Regent's Park. If the exterior promised fair, the interior far surpassed all expectation, and I have only to shut my eyes to a certain roughness and want of finish to fancy myself in a regal residence. The richness of the architectural ornaments,—the beauty of the frescoes and painted ceilings—the polish of the many-coloured and marble-like parquêtes—the height, size, and proportion of the apartments, produce a tout ensemble of the utmost splendour, entirely independent of the aid of furniture, which here, like the Narva chairs, seems to have been constructed before comfort was admitted to form an ingredient in human happiness.

It is a strange assimilation, this splendid case built over the simplest, most primitive customs. The family have no fixed hour for rising, and sometimes you find only your host's empty coffee-cup, whilst he is abroad or busy writing ere you have risen; or you meet a servant bearing his slender breakfast to him in bed, and long after you are settled to the occupation of the day, you see him emerging from his dormitory in his dressing-gown and with a most sleepy face. Breakfast is here not considered a meal, and not half the respect paid to it which the simplest lunch-tray would command with us; some take it standing, others smoking, and the children as often as not run off with their portion of *butterbrod* to devour it in comfort in some little niche, or upon the base of a pillar in the magnificent salle; or facilitate the act of mastication by a continual wandering from place to place, which upon English carpets would be considered nothing less than petty treason. Then at one o'clock we all pass through the suite of rooms to a dining-room, spacious and splendid enough for Crockford's Club-house, where an excellent,

plentiful, and formal repast is served, generally preceded by what they call here *Frühstück*, or breakfast, (the real breakfast according to the acceptation of the term being simply denominated *café*,) which is not treated as a midway morsel to silence the voice of appetite, but looked upon as a herald, the dinner being in full view, to summon and encourage all the powers of relish and enjoyment. Accordingly it consists of highly-spiced or salted dishes—of strong Swiss cheese, pickled fish, black pudding, sausages—washed down with a glass of potent liqueur, which the elder ladies seem to enjoy quite as much as the gentlemen. The cuisine is German, upon a foundation of native dishes, one of which especially no foreigner can pass a Wednesday or a Saturday in this country without tasting; for, by old established custom, on these two days a kind of pudding made of oatmeal, and called *Brei*, regularly recurs in lieu of soup; being handed round by one servant, while another follows with an ample jug of the richest cream, which you pour over your smoking hot brei without any reserve. Cream enters into a number of dishes, and is used with

a liberality which, except in the cases of its being eaten sour, covers in my view a multitude of culinary sins. Another peculiarity of daily occurrence is the rye bread, here slightly fermented for the table of the family, and most powerfully so for that of the attendants, and which a palate requires the initiation of a few weeks ere it can relish. White bread is here considered as a delicacy little inferior to cake, being made of the finest Moscow flour, easily recognisable by its dryness and insipidity, while the term *brod* is conventionally restricted exclusively to the long chocolate-coloured rye loaves; and several dear little blonde wiseheads were infinitely amused at the ignorance of the English visitor, who at dinner called for *Schwarzbrod*, black-bread. The mode of waiting is the same as in Germany—the dishes are carved at the sideboard, and carried round—a plan which sometimes occasions great mortification, for by the time the solitary lump of meat has been laboured through, swallowed past redemption, and your plate removed, exactly that vegetable succeeds which would have

given it the requisite relish. It is much the fashion in England to malign our old custom of carving at table, and advocate this foreign plan; but whatever trouble this mode may save the lady of the house, or the gentleman on her right, it affords no advantage to the guest, who here, while the servants are going their weary rounds with a file of dishes, and detained for minutes by some absent individual, or dainty child, may pine in vain for a piece of bread or glass of water. Tea at six is a slight meal, the beverage itself being of the finest description; but supper is a solemn repast of several courses, when so much is eaten that it is no wonder but little appetite survives for breakfast.

Servants of both sexes swarm here as numerously as in a house of the same rank in England —the one, it is true, with rusty coat and unblacked boots, but the other neat and tidy, generally still in her village costume, if unmarried her hair braided simply and picturesquely round her head, who goes sliding over the parquête floors, and, such is the inconvenience of these thoroughfare houses, has no

other passage from her working room to the kitchen than through the whole splendid suite of drawing-rooms. Here, as in all countries in an early stage of civilisation, the women labour twice as willingly and effectually as the men. As household servants they become trustworthy and active, work with their needle, wash, and dress hair superiorly well, while the Estonian ladies require so much attendance, and accustom their servants to consider them as so helpless, that it has cost me a severe dumb struggle with an officious lady's-maid to assert the independence of my own habits.

After taking a review of the dwelling-rooms and bed-rooms, all spacious and airy, and wanting nought save that most desirable of all bed-room requisites, privacy, my hostess led the way to her *schafferei*, or store-room, and, unlocking the door with a slight solemnity of manner, ushered me into a crowded treasury of household goods. The room was a very warehouse, hung round, fitted up, and strewed about with the numerous items of a housekeeper's economy, to which those who only consume

them often attach too little importance, and those who have to provide them too much. Side by side on the floor stood big-bodied bottles of spirit and liqueur, rolls of coarse linen, jars of pickles and preserves, hanks of wool, loaves of sugar, and bundles of flax. In deep chests around were the Moscow flour, salt, sago, saffron, starch, &c. &c., while tiers of drawers displayed large provisions of native dried apples, pears, cherries, pease, beans, birch-twigs, applied as a decoction for wounds—in short a perfect Hortus siccus for kitchen use. Around hung balls of twine and yarn, nets, corks, candles of as many colours and sizes as those offered to the Virgin of Casan, tanned sheep-skins both black and white, and numberless other pendent treasures, while one side was fitted up in numerous partitions, where the raisins, figs, and spices for daintier palates were stored. This schafferei is the particular sanctuary of the lady of the house, who, if she do all, has enough business to transact. For the duties of an Estonian *wirthschaft*, or *ménage*, are not confined to ordering dinner, or scolding ser-

vants, but, like those of our grandmothers a few generations back, who directed the weighty concerns of a large country residence, include the weaving of linen, the making of candles, the boiling of soap, brewing of liqueurs, &c.; and communication with distant towns being necessarily seldom, it requires no small forethought to provide that during the long months of winter the family shall never fail in sugar or plums, nor the many hangers-on in the back settlements of the house in the more stable articles of subsistence. It is true every lady has her housekeeper to advertise her that there is no more home-brewed vinegar in the bottle, or home-made starch in the tub, or, if she be unusually wealthy, an extra assistant, emphatically styled a *Mamselle*, on whom all these base cares descend; but housekeepers and mamselles will be human as well as their mistresses, and sometimes all three unite in forgetting some important trifle which equally spoils the dinner and the temper of the *Hausherr* for several days.

All these grave responsibilities render the post of a baron's lady one, however honour-

able, but of little repose. The very word *wirthschaft* possesses a talismanic power. By growing girls, who trust ere long to superintend one of their own, it is pronounced with a mixture of reverence and apprehension; by young brides, fresh in office, with a sententious consequence, as the password of their newly-acquired dignity; and by older versed matrons with a glee and evident inward gratulation which makes me suspect they are very glad of so convenient and comprehensive a word to absolve them from all other duties. In its various mysteries and details, however, there is much that is both interesting and instructive, and a clear-headed practical woman with a solid education will, by generalising one department, dispensing with another, and making use of her own sense in intricate cases, strip the term of half its terrors. Education has not hitherto been considered a necessary portion of an Estonian lady's dowry, and in old times it was thought the greater the simpleton the better the housekeeper; but the progress of enlightenment, and a few solitary intermarriages with

women from more advanced countries, have aroused the first suspicion of a fact, not perhaps sufficiently acknowledged anywhere—that educated persons excel in the meanest things, and that refined minds possess the most common sense.

After again consigning this eclectic magazine to its safe solitude, we continued our walk to the housekeeper's rooms, very comfortable and warm, with three little children and half a dozen chickens sharing the brick floor;—to the kitchen, where the men cooks were in active preparation round their flat stoves; and then on to the *Volkstube*, or people's room, where all the lower servants, the coachmen and grooms, (here not included as house servants,) the cow-girls and the sheep-boys, &c., all come in for their meals at stated times, and muster between twenty and thirty daily. This was a room for an artist—a black earthen floor, walls toned down to every variety of dingy reds, blacks, and yellows, with a huge bulwark of a stove of a good terra cotta colour, and earthen vessels, and wooden tubs and benches;

and in short every implement of old-fashioned unwieldiness and picturesque form. But the chief attractions were the inmates, for, hard at work, plying their spinning-wheels, sat, either singly or in groups, about fifteen peasant girls —their many-striped petticoats, and dull blue or grey cloth jackets, their tanned locks falling over their shoulders, and deep embrowned spinning-wheels, telling well against the warm tones around them. In some the hair was so light a hue as exactly to repeat the colour of the flax upon their spindles, and these, the housekeeper informed us in broken German, were the surest of husbands—flaxen hair being a feature that the hearts of the peasants are never known to resist. Most of these picturesque damsels were barefooted, and one pretty yellow-haired lassie, observing that she was particularly an object of attention, let her hair fall like a veil over her stooping face, and peeped archly at us from between the waving strands. I can't say that any of these young ladies looked particularly clean or inviting, but every vice has its pleasant side, and the

worst of dirt and filth is, they are so picturesque. Some of them rose on being addressed, and, stooping low, coaxed us down with both hands —much as if they were trying to smooth down our dresses. This is the national salutation to their superiors, especially if there be a request to make. Further on stood a stout kitchen-girl, her jacket thrown off, and only her shift over her shoulders, kneading in a deep trough with a strong wooden bat the coarse bread which is called by distinction the *Volksbrod*, or people's bread. The spinning-girls belong to the estate, and attend at the *hof*, or court, as the seigneur's house is termed, for so many weeks in the winter, to spin under the housekeeper's superintendence; nor do they appear very averse to this labour, for, besides the smart grooms and soft shepherds who assort with them at meal-times, this Volkstube is the resort of every beggar and wandering pedler, and the universal tattleshop of the neighbourhood.

The further branches of this spinning department are among the most interesting of a

lady's wirthschaft. The commoner linen is woven in the cottages of the peasantry, but the more fanciful and delicate manufactures, the diaper for towels, the damask for table-linen, devolve to a regular weaver, of which each estate maintains one or more; and who sends in his book of patterns for the lady to select grounds, centres, and borders, according to her taste. If she possess this quality in a higher degree, she may further diversify the work by sketching some flower or arabesque, which the weaver imitates with much ingenuity. And no first view of any particular article of furniture made expressly to our design, no inspection of new drawing-room curtains of which we have chosen the material, lining, binding, and fringe, can afford greater eagerness and interest than the first unrolling of the bundles of shining, unbleached diaper, or damask linen, as they come from these private looms. In Estonia, as in Germany, custom requires that a bride should not only bring to her ardent lover that inestimable treasure—herself—but also set off the gift to greater advantage by waggon-loads

of household furniture, sideboards of plate and glass, and chests of linen. A careful parent, therefore, who concludes that her daughter is born in order one time or other to fulfil Nature's great law, cannot well begin to amass too early, and ere the infant be fairly out of its long clothes the first foundation of the dozen-dozens of sheets and table-linen, which are to give her additional grace in the eyes of her lord, is laid. In former days this was carried to a much greater extent, and a happy house full of daughters groaned with the growing treasures of their *Austeuer*, or dowry; but of late a wakening perception—an economical suspicion of the expedience of not laying by "treasures which rust and moth can corrupt, or thieves break through and steal," as well as an increasing demand for money, and, what is a more pertinent argument than all, the plentiful remnants of grandmothers' and even great-grandmothers' wardrobes, has somewhat corrected the ardour for accumulation.

Within these great houses not a breath of cold is experienced. The rooms are heated by

stoves frequently ornamental rather than otherwise; being built in tower-like shapes, story over story of pure white porcelain, in various graceful architectural mouldings; sometimes surmounted with classic figures of great beauty, and opening with brass doors, kept as bright as if they were of gold. In houses of less display, these stoves are merely a projection in the wall, coloured and corniced in the same style as the apartment. In adjoining rooms they are generally placed back to back, so that the same fire suffices for both. These are heated but once in the twenty-four hours, by an old Caliban, whose business during the winter it is to do little else. Each stove will hold a heavy armful of billet, which blazes, snaps, and cracks most merrily; and when the ashes have been carefully turned and raked with what is termed an *Ofen Gabel*, or stove-fork, so that no unburnt morsel remains, the chimney aperture is closed over the glowing embers, the brass doors firmly shut, and in about six hours after this the stove is at the hottest—indeed it never cools. Great precau-

tion is necessary in preventing a too hasty closing of the chimney, for if the smallest piece of uncalcined wood be overlooked, the foul effect of charcoal air is instantly perceived. On this account the stoves are generally lighted in the morning, so that all possibility of carelessness may be obviated ere night; for it is quite impossible to enforce the necessary caution upon the ignorant servants. What can a few ends of blazing wood signify? they fancy; so down goes the chimney, and swing go the brass doors; but within a quarter of an hour the unconscious individual who remains in the room feels a sickening, black headache stealing over him, and, if he be a novice to the sensation, begins to impeach, one after another, all the foreign messes of which he has been partaking, as containing properties uncongenial to his powers of digestion, and little suspects that the insidious enemy is around and about him, mingling with the very breath of life. The only remedy is immediately to open door and chimney aperture, which draws the foul air quickly out of the room. Among the servants

and lower orders, whose nerves are not so easily affected, and who are at liberty to heat their own dens and adulterate their own atmosphere as much as they please, fatal instances sometimes occur; and the only wonder is that they are not more general.

At this season the double windows have long been adjusted, which further assist to dull the sombre and fugitive light which Nature allows us. Generally, every room is provided with what is called a *Klap Fenster*, or double pane, on a hinge, the one opening inwards, the other outwards, which are *sometimes* allowed to admit the outer air for ten minutes in the day; but in many families such a pneumatic antipathy, descended from father to son, still prevails, that these inlets of a cooler atmosphere are strictly interdicted; or, if there beforehand, carefully pasted over with paper. At the same time the height and size of the apartments—the absence of all carpets and curtains—the number of thoroughfares, all, bed-rooms included, with their doors wide open, so that a long suite or circle of apartments answers only

the purpose of one enormous room,—here maintains a circulation of air which obviates the feeling of a confined atmosphere. This equable temperature to live in, retire to rest and rise by, is certainly the most agreeable luxury, and there can be no surprise that foreigners rail at our rooms which freeze them by the window or scorch them by the fire; but a more important fact attending this general distribution of heat consists in the absence of all pulmonary complaints and rheumatic maladies in this severe climate, though the want of fresh air—no necessary attendant, however, on this mode of heating—engenders other diseases. How many a delicate girl in our own consumption-stricken land lays the first stone of her early grave in her finishing year at some boarding-school, where she sleeps in a freezing atmosphere, never sufficiently warms herself by day, and frequently fails in that generous diet which might qualify these evils! With us it is a prevailing idea that a sudden transition from a warm room to the cold outer air is attended with great risk to the health.

How often are we reminded, on entering a house, to cast off part of our wrappers lest we should miss the warmth on returning to the external atmosphere! But this is a mistake—for those who issue from their homes, in the sharpest day of winter, thoroughly warm, are much less sensible to the cold, and equally less liable to its ill effects, than those who, having sat, chilly and shivery, over their warmthless grates, seek in out-door exercise a more active circulation, and often return to spend this acquired warmth gradually during the rest of the day, and to be kept awake for the first hours of the night by that common inconvenience of cold feet. It is a fact, which all upon trial will acknowledge, that issuing, properly clothed, from a warm bath, the outer atmosphere will appear to have increased in the interim several degrees in warmth; and the Russian peasant, who exemplifies this case in its greatest extreme by running from his vapour-bath at the moment when his perspiration is most profuse to roll in the snow, or to dash through a hole in the ice into the river,

is hardly sensible of the violence of this transition.

After this summary of the house, and the various pros and cons of its internal economy, you must now accompany me to the numerous buildings scattered around, all on the same scale of grandeur as itself, where the domestic herds pass their long winter in shelter, warmth, and almost darkness. In the first we entered, a noble edifice 120 feet long, and supported down the centre by a row of solid pillars, above a thousand sheep were most magnificently lodged, affording as they congregated round their cribs, or quietly stopped eating to gaze upon us, a most novel and striking picture of a vast northern fold. In another building was a herd of stalled cattle, some destined for slaughter, others milch kine, with many a bare-footed peasant-girl and half-full machine of milk at their sides. Further on, the pigs had their domicile, and the fowls theirs, and in the midst of these buildings rose the *Brandtwein's Küche*, or brandy-kitchen, where the process of distilling from rye, barley, or potatoes, goes on

night and day; the refuse grains of which contribute to fatten the cattle we have just quitted. It will easily be supposed that the task of calculating and providing food for this multiplication of mouths, all dependent on the help of man, is no light one. Every animal has so many pounds of hay allotted to him per day, and each week's consumption is something which it never entered into the heart of an English farmer to conceive: and, if the winter exceed its usual limits—if these poor quadrupeds, which go up into their annual ark in the month of October, be not released till the beginning of May, a scarcity of food can hardly be hindered. Fresh litter is strewed daily, which never being removed, the cattle stand at least six feet higher at the close than at the commencement of their captivity. In this consists the main provision of manure for the summer's use. The sheep were all of a picked Merino breed, to which the closest attention is paid to preserve it *intacte*. This is a branch of husbandry only lately undertaken in Estonia, and at present attended with great

success and profit. Every sheep has its parentage, day of birth, and number, carefully registered in a book, and is individually recognised by a peculiar combination of perforations on the ear, which by a simple scale of numerals may be made to indicate above a thousand. Thus any *black sheep* of accidental introduction can be instantly detected. Here were, however, a couple of English sheep,—nice, gentle, useless, shepherdess-looking animals, with long coarse shaggy fleeces and short legs, on whom the Saxon shepherd looked down most disdainfully, pronouncing them good for nothing but to *eat*. Evil betide the flock if, by an open window or insecure door, a wolf force its way into the fold! One savage animal has been known to worry hundreds in the night without devouring one.

From the farm-yard we turned our course to the garden, or what will prove to be such when this three feet of snow shall have disappeared. Here were also a number of tender creatures under shelter in the noble line of greenhouses and hothouses, while the grape-

ries and peacheries were in different stages of forwardness—the trees in the latter just putting forth their delicate pink blossoms. These, however, and the other usual exotic tenants of such glass houses elicited no sentiment beyond that of admiration; but, when we reached a small scanty plant of common ivy—that child of English growth, which clusters from bough to bough, and wanders free over church, cottage, and ruin, here stuck in a pot and feebly grasping a slight treillage—my sentimental side was fairly touched—"Home, sweet home; there is no place like home!"

LETTER THE EIGHTH.

Ubiquity and transferability of happiness — Exhilarating effects of the cold—Winter-walks—Character of the woods —The wolves—Christmas and New Year's day—Sledging and its difficulties—The great dinner-party—Stoical propensities of Estonian gentlemen—Attractions of Estonian ladies—Novel dishes—Length of visits.

To those who live so long in one place, or under one set of habits, as to render the idea of any other unbearable—who fancy a winter's day without a blazing fire must be insupportable, and a country life without the aid of a daily post a kind of banishment;—to such as these an avowal of perfect happiness and comfort from one buried in a remote country-house, on a remote part of the shores of the Baltic,—for whom to all intent and purpose the Capital exists not, nor scarcely the world, be-

yond the white line or dark forest which bounds the horizon,—must appear nothing less than the contradictory perversity of a most obstinate species of philosophy. Is it possible that people can be so wilful and absurd as to fancy themselves happy in a situation where they neither eat, drink, sleep, nor warm themselves in the manner they have been accustomed to—where they neither see an object nor hear a sound (one dear face and voice in this case excepted) that has ever been familiar to them before, and where, in short, all is new, strange, and in many respects uncongenial? This is all very true, and in the providential adaptation of the human mind—in its alternate tenacity and facility—in the strength with which it adheres to the old home, and the readiness with which it engrafts itself upon the new one, we may justly find cause equally for wonder as for gratitude. But, besides kindness, that best of all gifts, whether at home or abroad, the great mainspring of this excellent transferability of human happiness lies in the long-established possession of habits of rational

occupation—that active philosophy which renders all other superfluous—that house which the mind carries about with itself, and which, once firmly constructed, is easily packed and easily transported—contracting and expanding to circumstance, and adapting itself to every clime and soil. Would that the heart were as accommodating! but this, like a wayward child, either pitches its tent in some forbidden nook—or trusts its treasure to some harsh keeper—or buries it in some lonely grave; and, while the mind is boasting its own wholesome stores of bread and water, silently broods over the sweeter gifts that might have been its own.

There is something in the sense of strangeness—in the luxury of wonder—of which, as appertaining to the other dreams of early youth, we deplore the loss, though, on the other hand, in all cultivated minds it is superseded by that ceaseless spring of interest which has the two-fold advantage of being becoming to all ages and applicable to all scenes. For this is a true saying, and worthy to be believed of all who, bound by home duties, are apt to

consider travellers of all their fellow-creatures the most enviable, that those who cannot find objects to interest them within a five-miles drive of their own doors, and especially in our richly stored England, will find a foreign soil just as sterile. A modern Russian author wisely says, "Instead of travelling in order to learn, we had better learn in order to travel;" and who will deny the truth of this?

It is seldom that a foreigner enters a new country, as I have done this, "just in time to be too late:"—Summer's busy workshop has long been closed, and Nature has shrouded herself deep within her monumental garments, though, with the true spirit of classical coquetry, like the Spartan maiden of yore, she leaves here and there a rent, to give an inkling of what is beneath, and whet the appetite for hidden beauties—shows me here a line of grey rocks butting through the snow, and there a dashing cascade, which the frost has not completely stiffened, until I am as impatient for her unrobing as any Lacedemonian lover.

There is something, however, very exhila-

rating in this breathless, still, bright cold—with a clean white expanse—a spotless world before you—every tree fringed—every stream stopped—freedom to range over every summer impediment; while the crystal snow, lighting up into a delicate pink or pearly hue, or glistening with the brightest prismatic colours beneath the clear, low sun, and assuming a beautiful lilac or blue where our long shadows intercept its rays, can no longer be stigmatised as a dead lifeless white. We walk every day, and no sooner are the heavy double doors which effectually seal our house heard to open, than half a dozen huge, deep-mouthed cattle-hounds come bounding to meet us through the deep snow, oversetting, with the first unwieldy caress, some little one of our party, scarce so tall as themselves, and even besetting the biggest with a battery of heavy demonstrations, to which it is difficult to present a firm front. Sometimes we take the beaten track of the road, where peasants with rough carts, generally put together with less iron than an English labourer would wear in

his shoes, pass on in files of nine or ten, as often as not the sheepish-looking driver with his elf locks superadding his own weight to the already overladen little horse—or where a nimble-footed peasant-woman, with high cap and clean sheepskin coat, plunges half-leg high into the deep snow to give you room, and nodding, and showing her white teeth, cheerily ejaculates *Terre hommikust*, or Good day. Or we follow a track into the woods so narrow that we walk in each other's steps like wild Indians, and the great dogs sink up to their bodies in the snow whilst endeavouring to pass us. This is the land of pines—lofty erect battalions—their bark as smooth as the mast of a ship—their branches regular as a ladder, varying scarce an inch in girth in fifty feet of growth, —for miles interrupted only by a leaning, never a crooked tree—with an army of sturdy Lilliputians clustering round their bases—fifty heads starting up where one yard of light is admitted. What becomes of all the pruning, and trimming, and training—the days of precious labour spent on our own woods? Nature

here does all this, and immeasurably better, for her volunteers, who stand closer, grow faster and soar higher than the carefully planted and transplanted children of our soil. Here and there a bare jagged trunk, and a carpet of fresh-hewn boughs beneath, show where some peasant-urchin has indulged in sport which with us would be amenable to the laws—viz. mounted one of these grenadiers of the forest, hewing off every successive bough beneath him, till, perched at giddy height aloft, he clings to a tapering point which his hand may grasp. The higher he goes, the greater the feat, and the greater the risk to his vagabond neck in descending the noble and mutilated trunk. In perambulating these woods, the idea would sometimes cross us that the wolves, the print of whose footsteps, intercepted by the dotted track of the hare and slenderly defined claws of numerous birds, are seen in different directions, and even beneath the windows of our house, might prowl by day as well as by night. One day, when, fortunately perhaps, unescorted by the huge dogs,

we were mounting a hill to a neighbouring mill, my companion suddenly halted, and laying her hand on mine silently pointed to a moving object within fifty yards of us. It was a great brute of a wolf stalking leisurely along —its high bristly back set up—its head prowling down—who took no notice of us, but slowly pursued the same path into the wood which we had quitted a few minutes before. We must both plead guilty to blanched cheeks, but beyond this to no signs of cowardice ; and, in truth, the instances are so rare of their attacking human beings, even the most defenceless children, that we had no cause for fear. They war not on man, unless under excessive pressure of hunger, or when, as in the case of a butcher, his clothes are impregnated with the smell of fresh blood. This is so certain an attraction, that peasants carrying butchers' meat are followed by wolves, and often obliged to compound for their own safety by flinging the dangerous commodity amongst them ; or, if in a sledge, three or four of these ravenous animals will spring upon the basket of meat and

tear it open before their eyes. Wherever an animal falls, there, though to all appearance no cover nor sign of a wolf be visible for miles round, several will be found congregated in half an hour's time. Such is their horrid thirst for blood, that a wounded wolf knows that only by the strictest concealment can he escape being torn in pieces by his companions. As for the dogs, it is heartrending to think of the numbers which pay for their fidelity with their lives. If a couple of wolves prowl round a house, or fold, at night, a dozen dogs, with every variety of tone, from the sharp yap of the shepherd's terrier, to the hoarse bay of the cattle-hound, will plunge after them, and put them to flight. But if one, more zealous, venture beyond his companions, the cunning brutes face about, seize him, and before three minutes are over there is nothing left of poor *Carrier Pois*, or sheep-boy,—a common name for these great mastiffs,—but a few tufts of bloody hair. The cattle defend themselves valiantly, and the horses, and the mares especially who have a foal at their side, put them-

selves in an attitude of defence, and parry off the enemy with their fore feet—their iron hoofs often taking great effect. But woe be to them if the wolf, breaking through the shower of blows, spring at the throat, or, stealing behind his prey, fasten on the flank!—once down all is over, though there be but one wolf. Sometimes, in a sudden wheel round, the wolf will seize upon a cow's tail, on which he hangs with his jaws of ten-horse power, while the poor animal drags him round and round the field, and finally leaves the unfortunate member in his grasp; too happy to escape with a stump. At one time these animals increased so frightfully in number, that the Ritterschäft, or assembly of knights, by which name the internal Senate of this province is designated, appointed a reward of five roubles for every pair of ears brought to the magistrate of the district. This worked some change, and, in proportion as the wolves have fallen off, the Ritterschaft has dropped its price, though an opposite policy would perhaps have been more politic, and now a pair of ears, generally secured from the

destruction of a nest of young ones, does not fetch more than a silver rouble, or three roubles and a half.* An old plan to attract them was to tie a pig in a sack, squeaking of course, upon a cart, and drive him rapidly through a wood or morass. Any cry of an animal is a gathering sound for the wolf, but the voice of man, made in his Creator's image, will hold him aloof. The blast of a horn greatly annoys them, a fiddle makes them fly, and the jingling of bells is also a means of scaring them, which, besides the expedience of proclaiming your approach in dark nights on these noiseless sledge-roads, is one reason why all winter equipages are fitted up with bells.

Foreigners may laugh at our "never ending, still beginning" national topic, the weather, but we may as justly retort on their *Bahn*, or sledging-road, which at this season generally offers a better beaten track for discussion than for traffic. The chances of there being a good bahn, or no bahn at all, for

* Nevertheless a thousand wolves upon the average are killed in a year.

Christmas—the probabilities of those scattered members of a family, all verging to one common centre at this period, being obliged, on their return, to exchange the smooth soles of their sledges for the rough wheels of their carriages, or *vice versâ*, are here speculated and betted upon with the utmost zest. For though frost and occasional falls of snow commence sometimes as early as October, a steady sufficiency of the latter for sledging can hardly be reckoned upon till the new year be turned—a visitor, it must be remembered, not admitted over the Russian frontier until twelve days after its reception with other nations. Why Estonia, however, whose Lutheran Calendar has no jealous saints to regard, should continue in the old style, the neighbouring provinces of Livonia and Courland having already departed from it, I am not able to say. For this reason, our Christmas and New Year's day were solemnized in the solitude of our own thoughts; for though each day of our lives be a birthday—an anniversary—the commencement of a new year,—yet mutable, careless

human nature requires and loves to be weighted down by fixed dates, which occur like stages in life, reminding us of the road we are travelling—or act like friendly monitors, calling together in kindly, or at any rate in common thought, families long separated or long estranged, and speaking to the hardened conscience with a power no other influence can exert. There are few hearts that can resist the pleadings of an anniversary, be it of sorrow or joy—that can steel themselves to those mute admonitions which tell

> "Of duties first imposed,
> Long since neglected;
> Of true love first disclosed,
> Long since rejected."

Happy those who can meet such days with undiminished self-satisfaction and peace of mind! —they are the unerring tests of a good conscience.

When the 6th of January, N. S., therefore arrived, with its holiday cheer and feasting, all sentiment on our parts had passed away, or rather refused to be transposed, and I was left

the freer to look on the outer frame of society which this occasion offered. Christmas is here treated as including three days, each being considered sacred alike, or rather none of the three being attended with any observances except those of general hilarity and visiting. These days are designated, and invitations worded, as the first, second, and third *Weihnachts Tage*, for the first of which we were bidden to a large assembly at the house of a neighbouring family. To prepare for a dinner-party at a residence twelve wersts removed, we had therefore to commence our evening toilette at the unusual hour of eleven in the morning —reminding us of the diary of one of our English Princesses, who mentions, "the hour of dinner is becoming marvellously late; I dined yesterday at twelve o'clock,"—or taking us back to the times of our Queen Elizabeth's visit to Kenilworth, when it may be remembered the dinner was delayed till the unprecedented hour of two,—it being further recorded in the chronicle that, by an original and most happy thought of the Earl of Leicester,

the clock on the great tower at Kenilworth Castle, during the whole time of the Queen's stay, pointed to the hour of two, in order perpetually to remind her Majesty of the pleasures of the banquet. It must be hoped that the royal visitor wore some little private kettle of her own in order to rectify the horological mistakes to which this delicate attention of her host must have given rise.

By twelve o'clock we were equipped; not without considerable apprehension, however, of being too late, nor were our movements now such as attend those tardy belles of our own country, who, having no fears of frost-bites or of lethargic stupor before their eyes, skip into the carriage, and are whirled off before the door is well clapped to. Here, on the other hand, just as my foot was descending very nimbly into the sledge, I felt myself pulled back by my tender hostess, who, beneath the wools and furs of my outer habiliments, had espied a most unguarded satin shoe and silk stocking. I was now hurried back again into the warm hall, where, before I well knew what they were

about, my feet were in the firm grasp of two buxom smiling Estonian handmaidens, the one pulling on a red worsted sock, the other a fur boot, and, in their hurry, reversing and not mending the matter, when they had found out the mistake; while a sweet laughing pair of eyes, gleaming from the depths of a fur collar, stood over me enjoying the joke. This necessary preamble finished, for the thermometer stood at 5° of Fahrenheit, we seated ourselves, or rather sunk into the bed of down, with which the seat and floor of the sledge were spread, when men-servants and maid-servants crowded zealously round to smooth and fold our cloaks firm about us; which done, several large loose down cushions were tumbled in, and tucked over our knees and down into every spare corner—a bear-skin drawn firm over all—and the leather finally hooked tight above. And now the coachman, a bearded Russian, with bare neck, and grey cloth coat of home-spun wool well stuffed beneath with a warm sheepskin, and indented at the ample waist with a belt of bright colours, threw one last

look' behind him to ascertain that his ladies were in their right places—bless him! we could not have stirred,—and a man-servant in ponderous cloak having mounted beside him, now gathered his round braided reins in a whole handful together, and off set the four eager horses galloping abreast like the steeds in a Roman car. These sledges may be best understood as a slight barouche, put upon soles instead of wheels, with long transverse poles to prevent them from overturning, and stretchers of leather like extended wings in front to screen the traveller from the showers of snow which fly from the horses' hoofs." It must not be supposed that sledging is here such smooth gliding work as it is generally represented; on the contrary, a succession of drifts, worn into deeper declivities and higher ascents by the continual traffic, will subject you to a bumping kind of movement, which, in spite of your solid feather-bed casing, is neither convenient nor agreeable. Then suddenly the sledge declines a fathom deep on one side, and out flies the coachman's or footman's leg to act

as an additional prop, and you lie comfortably cradled upon your half-suffocated companion, when, with a loud jingle of all four horses, the sledge is jerked out of the hole, and the travellers once more stuck upright. And then, perhaps, when the track becomes narrower, the outer horses are driven into the loose deep snow, and one of them tumbles over head and ears into an invisible ditch, whence, his long traces giving him perfect liberty, he clambers out again unassisted, shakes the snow from his sides, and snorts and stamps with the utmost impatience to be off again. The two centre *Deichsel Pferde*, or pole-horses, are fastened firmer, and the middle of the track being always the best, the most spirited of the Baron's stables are generally placed here, while the side horses take the luck of the road, jumping over loose drifts, or picking their way with their delicate feet over any road-side encumbrance, and, with their graceful necks and gleaming eyes at full liberty, are never frightened, and never at a loss to extricate themselves from any difficulty. Hedges and walls are the destruc-

tion of sledging roads; wherever there is a barrier, there the snow collects, and a line of battened fence; here the usual partition, will ruin the track—sunk ditches are the only mode of divisions advisable for snow countries. The intelligence of the coachman is no less surprising than that of his horses: regardless of the summer line of road, he steers straight over bank, river, and morass, for his object, and like a bird of passage seldom misses the mark. Thus it is that in the dull long season of winter, when friends are most wanted, they are here brought closest together; for the same morass which in summer is circumnavigated by a drive of twenty wersts may in winter be crossed by one of half an hour's duration.

The great structure of Fähna—for such was the name of the residence to which we were bound—was soon seen rearing itself in the distance, a square mass against the sky, without a tree or object near it. Here, our wrappers being gradually peeled off, we issued like butterflies from our woollen cells, and were ushered into a large assembly, where the hostess, a

pretty graceful young woman, came forward, and welcomed us with the utmost courtesy and good breeding, and even found a few pleasing, though imperfect, words in English to say to her foreign visitor, with a kindness of manner and intention which quite won my heart. Immediately upon our arrival the *frühstück* of Swiss cheese, and pickled *strömlin*, a fish peculiar to Estonia, with red and white liqueurs, was handed round, after which a servant whispered something to the hostess, who rose, and with a distinct voice and graceful manner simply said, "May I beg you all to table?" and, herself taking the lead with the oldest gentleman of the party, we filed off, a party of at least fifty, a cluster of little boys and girls bringing up the rear; for an invitation to the heads of a family is tacitly understood to include all the olive-branches, however numerous or tender. As each couple entered the dining-room, the cavalier bowed profoundly, disengaged himself, and went his way, while all the ladies seated themselves on one side and all the gentlemen on the other,

the hostess heading the table, whilst her husband mingled with his male guests. Conversation was therefore restricted to the different lines, and the process of serving dinner absolving, as I have before observed, the gentlemen from all obligation of courtesy, and no intimation to venture a conversation across the narrow table being apparent, not a single gentleman addressed his fair *vis-à-vis* during the whole repast. This is an additional reason for retaining our old English mode, as engendering trifling attentions which tend to keep up the outward semblance of good breeding, the absence of which I am inclined to think in some measure contributes to the Transatlantic style of manners which are observable among the present generation of young Estonian nobles. The courtesies of the table began with the well-side and water-drawing times of the patriarchs; the woman-despising Turk eats alone. My own position was very enviable between two charming ladylike women, who proved the most agreeable representatives of their country. The dinner was sumptuous,

with a profusion of splendid glass and plate, the latter, as well as the beautiful damask linen, marked with the maiden name of our hostess, and which, it may be as well to mention here, though I should grieve to see that pretty animated face shrouded beneath a mourning cap, all revert with the rest of her dowry to the widow on her husband's death. Among the novel dishes introduced on this occasion was the elk, a harmless animal which infests the Livonian woods, in flavour much resembling venison; and a preserve of rose-leaves, a luscious kind of ambrosia, like eating perfumes, or a smack of paradise on *earth*; and, lastly, a dish which the season alone rendered peculiar, for who would have thought of ices on Christmas-day? But no one could quarrel with the cold interloper, for the room was hot to suffocation, and the delicious walnut-cream ice melted most gratefully down our throats. When the last dishes of fruits and bon-bons had been handed round, our hostess rose, and, the gentlemen clustering at the door, each resumed his lady where he had

left her, and, conducting her into the next room, again made his bow and escaped. Coffee was now handed round, and a long and superb suite of rooms being open to us, the whole party of ladies paraded up and down in distinct groups; after which the matrons sat down to sober converse, and talked, as good wives should do, of their children and their *wirthschaft*, and some drew forth little ladylike bits of embroidery on which their fair fingers were soon busied, while the older ones knitted away most energetically at the "weary pund."

Meanwhile the younger portion, including many beautiful and graceful young women, well dressed and elegant in manner, clustered together in girlish guise, in the deep recesses of the windows, or round the piano, or played at bagatelle with many an animated laugh and jest. And where were the gentlemen all this time? doubtless compensating themselves for the compulsory separation they had endured during the twenty long courses of dinner, and mingling gaily with the fair beings from whom it must have been a punishment

to them to sever. But alas! the muse of gallantry shakes her head, and falteringly and most unwillingly owns the incredible fact that, to "eyes like loadstars and tongues sweet air," these young stoics preferred the attractions of cards and smoke—found more beauty in the length of a pipe than in the slender tall figures which roved up and down the suite of rooms, more interesting study in a brown cigar than in the soft or brilliant glances of the maiden party. After a couple of hours tea was served, but still the gentlemen kept close behind the clouds with which they enveloped their godheads from our grosser view, nor till supper was served—here conducted on the same formal style of separation as the dinner—did they venture to emerge. For their credit's sake, may the next generation of their countrywomen be neither so fair nor so pleasing!

It was a beautiful starlight night as, with a repetition of every precaution, we again took to our sledges, and a procession of at least ten kept together in a harmony of bells for the

first three wersts of our road, when, diverging to separate tracks across the morass, each lost sight of the other, and we reached our home at midnight, having been absent just twelve hours,— rather too expensive a mode of visiting.

LETTER THE NINTH.

Girl at her wheel—Estonian peasant—Misfortunes of a sitter—Interior of an Estonian cottage—Farming tenure of the peasant—Enfranchisement of the peasantry—Its effects—New names — Difficulties of choice—Visit to church—Lutheran clergymen—Church history.

AFTER the festivities of this pseudo Christmas and New Year, all conducted in the same style of plenty, hospitality, and formality I have described, were passed over, which could hardly be said to terminate till after the 18th of January, this being the fête of the three kings, an old Roman Catholic observance, kept up rather as prolonging the season of good cheer than from any religious motive, we returned to our usual quiet life, where, if other occupation failed, the *Volks Stube* offered a bevy of rural subjects for the pencil, with no trouble beyond

that of selection. And not seldom was a fair-haired maiden weeded from among her companions, and transplanted with her spinning-wheel to our apartment, where, modestly pursuing her own vocations, she gave matter to mine. One day, to diversify the subject, a tall Estonian peasant was ushered in, bearing a note from a neighbouring family, wherein it appeared that, in consequence of some bantering questions and promises, they had sent the best-looking man the estate could boast to represent the physiognomy and costume of his class. And truly, as fine and good-looking a young man stood before us as needed to be seen. At first he returned our glance with rather more courage than a peasant here usually ventures to show, but, on being told his errand, blushed like a girl, and proceeded to place himself into the required position with a *mauvaise honte* which, it must be owned, was at first not limited to himself. He wore the regular peasant's costume,—his long hair falling on his shoulders; a coat made of undyed black wool down to his heels, with metal buttons and red

leather frogs; and his feet clad in the national *passeln*, or sandals, of untanned cow's hide. After the first novelty was over he stood sensibly and respectfully enough; and, being shown his miniature fac-simile, and told that it would go to England, acknowledged it to be *vegga illos*, very beautiful. Half a rouble and a glass of brandy made him happy, and he took his leave in perfect good humour with himself and us. But a few days after, a disastrous sequel to this adventure reached our ears. Under the conviction that he had been subject to the spells of a sorceress, his lady-love cast him off for another; his fellows taunted and avoided him; while, added to this, the innocent victim himself was in the utmost terror of mind lest this mysterious delineation of his person should prove the preamble to his being banished either to Siberia or—to England! It is to be hoped his personal charms soon repaired the first loss, but I could never hear anything further of my unfortunate sitter.

Wishing to see the Estonian peasant under every aspect, I requested my hostess—one

whose heart feels interest in the most stupid, and love for the most contemned, of her adopted countrymen—to exhibit to me some peasant's dwelling which might fairly represent the comforts of this class. Accordingly we drove to the abode of a hard-working, respectable Estonian, about three wersts removed, and were helped out of our sledge by a gaunt host with streaming locks, who stroked us down in the national fashion, and begged us to enter. The house was a one-storied erection, built of roughly-squared logs, and occupying as much space as any of our large old-fashioned farm-houses, with a double wall on the entrance side, separated by a passage of about six feet wide, which greatly tends both to warmth in winter and coolness in summer. In this passage an extremely filthy sow and a whole litter of little pigs were grunting and tumbling about with some other little animals, seemingly of the same generic origin, but which, on nearer inspection, proved to be part of our host's youthful family. To pass through the inner wall we stepped over a high ledge, through

an aperture wide enough for a Lambert, but hardly high enough for a child of twelve years old, more adapted apparently for quadrupeds than for men. Once housed, we were obliged to wait a few minutes before our eyes accustomed themselves to the darkness, or threw off the film of water with which the strong stinging atmosphere of wood-smoke obscured them, when the first object we discerned was a rosy peasant-girl weaving a piece of linen in the same gloom by which we could scarcely distinguish the loom. The room where we stood was at least twenty-five feet long; with a black earthen floor, strewn with fir-tips, and the chief object was the great stove. This was a huge mass of masonry towering among the dry rafters of the roof, with rough ledges of stones, up and down which a second litter of children were climbing in their shifts, while on the highest ledge lay a baby fast asleep. A projecting shelf of wood ran round two sides of the room, about two feet from the floor, which, strewn with straw, serves as the family-bed for the night, is converted by day to any

household use, and was conveniently fitted up with hen-coops underneath. There was no chimney in this apartment, and no light but from the low door. Further on were two other rooms, mere little dens, with a pane of dusky glass in each and a few articles of furniture—a couple of chairs and chests for clothes. The same roof houses the little horse and other cattle. There was nothing in all this to disgust—hard fare and independent habits,—and when we took our leave we made the little dirty shock-headed children very happy with some rolls of white bread, a dainty they see much more rarely than our poor children do cake.

This peasant occupies about twenty-five acres of land upon the estate where I am sojourning. Every estate is thus parcelled out, the proprietor having a considerable portion under his own management, the rest being divided among the peasants, who, from time immemorial, have belonged to the land, and till within the last few years in the condition of serfs. The same fields, therefore, for

which they formerly paid a rent, limited only by the will of the *Herr*, or lord, they now hold upon a tenure fixed by law, which is as follows:—Each peasant householder, or *Wirth*, occupies so much land, for which he pays rent in the shape of so many days' labour, man and horse, per week, upon the lord's fields; by certain contributions of corn; and of a calf, a goose, so many fowls or eggs, and so many bundles of flax—all of which last small tithes generally come within the lady's department, who has thus the products of a most extensive farm-yard to register and superintend. The smaller the occupation, the fewer the days of labour to perform, and the poorer the peasant. A so-called two days' *Wirth* generally performs the requisite labour in his own person, but a six days' *Wirth*, a rank which the peasant we had just quitted occupies, sends his labourers to supply his place, and, by sending two men three successive days, has the rest of his week undisturbed. Upon this estate no less than 360 days' work is contributed weekly, and yet the labour is not equal to the

demand. This allotment per week is the only fair arrangement, for, though many a week in winter occurs when no man can work, yet were the proprietor to claim all his permitted days only in the summer, the peasant would not have a day left to reap or sow for himself.

The act of enfranchisement in Estonia has not been accompanied by the advantages which those who abstractedly reckon the state of independence too high, and that of serfage too low, might expect. To this it may be urged that the blessing of freedom was bestowed on the Estonian peasant before he was in a condition to understand its import, though truly such a privilege is better given to a people too early than wrested by them too late. It redounds to the credit of these provinces of Estonia, Livonia, and Courland, that they were the first in the empire to coalesce with the late Emperor Alexander by enfranchising their peasantry—an act which took place in 1828; and it is quite a pity that our admiration for so noble a deed should be in any way interrupted by the troublesome collateral circum-

stance of their being pecuniarily the gainers thereby. When the peasants were serfs, their owners were interested in preserving them from absolute want, and in bad harvests the peasantry became, what they are to this day in Russia Proper, a real burthen to their lord. Also, whenever the serf was not able to pay his own poll-tax, the seigneur had to make up the deficiency; but now that the Estonian peasant is a free man, all these responsibilities, which he as little desired as understood to undertake, fall upon his own shoulders; for though many a humane seigneur still supplies the same help as formerly, yet these are but worthy exceptions. Consequently a failure in crops, added to the national improvidence, exposes the peasant to hardship and starvation which he never knew in his serf condition. Among the regulations intended as a substitute to these habits of dependence, a law has been instituted compelling each peasant, in good seasons, to contribute so much corn to the *Bauer Klete*, or peasant granary—thus realising a fund of provision against the winters of famine. But

as the Estonian has been placed in a state of freedom before he knew that forethought and prudence were its only safeguards, he seizes every occasion to evade this law, and, if the Herr be not vigilant in enforcing it, the store-house is found empty when famine has finished every other resource. One characteristic consequence of this emancipation was the adoption of family names by the peasants, who hitherto, like the Russian serf, had been designated only by his own and his father's baptismal appellatives. This accession of dignity was conferred only a few years back, when it cost the lord and lady no little trouble and invention to hunt up the requisite number and variety of names for the tenants of their estates. The gentleman took the dictionary — the lady, Walter Scott, for reference—with us it would have been the Bible—and homely German words were given, or old Scottish names revived, which may one day perplex a genealogist. The worst of it was, these poor creatures were very difficult to please, and many a young man who went away happy with his new family distinction returned the next day

with a sheepish look, owning that his lady had put him out of conceit of it, and that he would trouble the *Erra* (the Estonian corruption of *Herr*) to provide him with another, not seldom ending by begging leave to adopt the aristocratic, unsullied, sixteen or thirty-two quartered name of the Count or Baron under whom he served. But, however liberal of his neighbours' names, the Estonian Noble is in no hurry to bestow his own; far from running the risk of such vile identity, he does not even allow the peasant the same national appellation which countrymen of the same soil, whether high or low, generally wear alike. The aristocrat is an *Esthländer*, the peasant an *Esthe*. The noble's wife is a *Frau*, the peasant's a *Weib*, and any transposition of these terms would be deemed highly insulting.

Having thus seen the Estonian peasant in his home state, our next view of him was in a congregated mass; this occurred upon occasion of our first visit to the village church, about five miles from our superb dwelling, and of which, with rare exception, they are the exclu-

sive monopolisers. Here we found the peasants' sledges standing in double rows as thick along the road as the carriages before the Opera-house at a morning concert; and, entering through a dense crowd, smelling strongly of their sheep-skin habiliments and the smoky atmosphere in which they live, we mounted a gallery to a pew reserved for the family, whence we looked down upon a platform of human heads of every variety of rich blondes and browns—blacks there were but few, and greys none at all; though of wrinkles, failing limbs, and other signs of age, there was a premature profusion. The service, which was in Estonian, had commenced, and, after the first careless wonder with which you listen to a new language subsided, my eyes busied themselves with what was around them.

The men were all on one side, their long hair, untouched by scissars since their birth, divided down the centre of the head and flowing on their shoulders: the women on the other, with high helmet-shaped caps of every variety of bright colour—their gay ribbons and

bright locks streaming promiscuously from beneath; or sometimes all this lowly vanity covered with a white handkerchief, which, disposed in a band across the forehead, and falling in ample folds down the cheeks, ennobled many a homely set of features. Beauty there was but little: here and there a young rosy cheek and bright eye shot through the crowd, but the generality were plain rather than ugly. The first impression on the mind of this dense crowd of attentive poor was almost painful. Our Saviour's audiences were only the poor; and amongst the silent, listening throng who stood, each leaning with clasped hands upon his foremost neighbour's shoulder—here and there a child held aloft above the crush of limbs, while a row of sick and decrepit beings, ugly, abject, yet venerable, lying on mattresses in every picturesque form, occupied the centre, and Hebrew-draped heads and Apostolic countenances crowded around—you missed only the divine aspect from this ready-made and most touching picture. The women were chiefly in sheepskins or wolfskins, with gay bands round

their waists,—the men in the same, or in a coarse brown cloth with rows of silver buttons down the breast. The scene was enlivened by the presence of a bride—in other words a *fiancée*—who, at the publication of her banns, has the enviable privilege of appearing before the public in every rag and ribbon which it ever entered the head of any Estonian Madge Wildfire to desire, being literally loaded with all the ribbons, handkerchiefs, and petticoats which herself or her neighbours can muster; only the outer edge of each, in the insolence of her wealth, being visible, till the bride looks like the walking pattern-book of the *Kirchspiel*, or parish, and the admiring swain views at one glance both his companion and her wardrobe for life. But the head is more particularly the centre of attraction;—the helmet-shaped cap on these occasions being stuck full of flowers, ribbons, scraps of tailor's cabbage, peacock's feathers, and, in short, all the sweepings of the Baron's mansion, like an over-garnished shape of blancmange; while the young lady, oppressed alike by her feelings and her

finery, keeps every tag in a perpetual quiver, and hardly dares to lift up her heated countenance from her panoply of garments.

The service, to our ideas, was by no means impressive; being little more than a succession of monotonous psalm-singing in a minor key sustained by the congregation, after which the clergyman, a spare-looking gentleman with a very long nose, and, I should be inclined to think, a very cold one,—for the churches are not heated, and the thermometer kept its average of 10° of Fahrenheit,—delivered a sermon, leaning with Knox-like energy over the edge of the pulpit, and at the full stretch of his voice; for the congregation, who otherwise were devotion itself, and would not have disturbed him by a whisper, took no account of coughs, sneezes, blowing noses without the aid of pocket-handkerchiefs, and other little noises, including now and then a stout squall from a baby, and as loud a hush from the mother, till the preacher's voice was sometimes drowned. The church itself was a heavy ancient building, with simply groined roof, gay bedizened altar,

and whitewashed walls behung with tin urns and armorial bearings. Before the conclusion of the sermon a contribution was levied with long pole and bag at end, as elsewhere, into which kopecks of all weights and sizes tumbled, upon which the clergyman retreated to the altar, and, facing the audience, chanted a few sentences in a high key. This was the signal for dismissal: the solid mass stirred, and broke up into hundreds of fragments—the reeking church was abandoned—each recognised his own little sledge and horse among multitudes which seemed cast in the same mould—poles stuck—rope-reins entangled—bells jingled—and voices scolded and laughed alternately; and in five minutes the whole congregation were scouring away across the country.

The Lutheran clergymen, in point of pecuniary independence, are here barely kept on a respectable footing. They are paid in corn by the landholders, each peasant also contributing his corn, fowls, and eggs, for his little tenure, though in neither case above a fiftieth of the

produce. He has also an allotment of glebe-land, with a partial service from the peasants, and a house kept in repair, even to the sweeping the chimneys and mending a window,—the funds for this purpose proceeding from the Sunday collection, which, subscribed chiefly by the poor, I had hoped had been destined for the poor, and which are lodged in the hands of the *Kirchenvorsteher*, or churchwarden, always one of the noblesse in the vicinity.

In a large parish also there is some amount of fees—for a marriage in the upper classes fifty roubles—for administering the Sacrament twenty-five—which the pastor pockets; while the peasants bring their fifty kopecks, and in the latter case are never-failing attendants. Let no one imagine, however, that the pastor's life is a sinecure. Besides his weekly duties, and the penance of a cold church seven months in the year, he has to attend the call of his poor parishioners, scattered frequently over a circumference of a hundred wersts; while twice in the year all the boys and girls in the parish assemble for three weeks under his roof, to be

instructed and examined previous to confirmation; on which occasions the *Frau Pastorin* sets all of them to spin her flax, twine her cord, and do other little household jobs, and not seldom has the honour of entertaining the young Countesses or Baronesses who have come on the same errand, and must pass through the same *Lehre*. Thus it is that the sacraments are strictly observed, sometimes it is to be hoped for their own sakes, but principally as a political ordinance by which government keeps its eye on every individual in the realm; obliging him at stated intervals to emerge from the deep torrent of Russian population and bear witness of his existence. No one can elude these ceremonies, for no young lady can marry without the pastor's certificate of confirmation and Lord's Supper, and no young man can obtain his passport for foreign travel without the same: and thus, in point of fact, these sacred institutions are considered as mere forms of law. This throws also much business and responsibility into the pastor's hands, which begins with the birth of every individual in his parish, of which

he has to report not only the day, but the hour, —rather a difficult proceeding, considering the peasants have no clocks. It consequently happens that peasant-children are invariably born at sunrise, noon, or sunset; a circumstance which has given rise to inquiries in some over-zealous understrappers why it is that the peasant-ladies bless their lords at these three periods of the day, and no other!

The clergy, of which there is only one order, is here ordained by three fellow-pastors—the livings being in the gift of the landed proprietors of the Kirchspiel, before whom, like many of our dissenters, the various candidates preach for preference, and are elected according to their happy choice of a sermon. Altogether the form of religion here established is as inefficient and unsound as might be expected from its present utter political insignificance and past troublous history, which, as affecting both upper and lower classes most importantly, possesses much interest.

In ancient times the Estonians worshipped almost as many gods as there were objects in

nature and aims in life. They had gods of the sun and moon, gods of fishing and hunting, gods of good harvests, and gods of good journeys; at the same time, agreeably to the theology of all nations, they had a superior and invisible deity called *Jummal*, which name was transferred to the god of Christianity, and has descended to the present day—*Jummal aga*, or God be with you, being the universal mode of salutation and farewell, and the first distinct sentence a stranger retains among the quick babble of their gentle language. The primeval attempts to win them over from idolatry were accompanied with great selfishness and cruelty. The Danes were the first to disgust them with the equivocal blessings of their mode of Christianity, and it is no wonder that the simple idolaters had as little relish for the unexplained God of their invaders as for the heavy tribute by which they announced his presence. Contented with their unexpensive deities of forest and dell, they resisted to the utmost; only declaring themselves converts after their huts were razed, their land plundered, and their best

hunters slain; relapsing the moment their new brethren's backs were turned, and revenging themselves by daring piracies in the Gulf and retorts of a more positive nature upon the coast of Denmark. Again and again did the Danes return to enforce the dreaded punishment of Christianity, and compel the unwilling flock to a bloodstained fold; carrying off even children as hostages for the parents' continuance in the profession of Christianity: till, growing cunning with oppression, the Estonians not unfrequently held out the voluntary endurance of baptism as a bribe, gaining time whilst thus employed for a stronger party to fall upon their persecutors with more deadly effect. At length in 1170 the Danes bethought themselves of appointing a bishop, by name Fulko, in Estonia, or, according to other accounts, a legate from Pope Alexander III. But the whole embryo diocese mutinied, and Fulko is believed never to have put foot on Estonian soil. For the proposed affront also the Estonians revenged themselves by breaking into Sweden, laying waste the bishopric, and

murdering the bishop of Upsala. Aided however by the Livonians on the opposite side, then under the dominion of the *Swertbrüder* —an order of Livonian knights—the Danes at length established their power, and the Estonians thus betwéén two fires, were fain to submit to the yoke of several Roman Cátholic bishops, whose residences, of which many ruins still remain,—one with the significant name of *Fegfeuer*, or Purgatory—were the first fortresses erected in the land, and who enforced their persuasions by well-armed garrisons. All liberty was now over with the poor Estonians. To these ees were added convents and monasteries, and the whole catalogue of extortion, rapacity, and crime of the papal dominion, here seen in stronger colours from the utter want of civilization. The motto of each superior was to wrest all he could, and keep as he best might; and soon the bishops, and their allies the knights, fell out, and it not unfrequently happened that, returning from helping or spoiling a fellow-prelate, or from telling a tale of complaint at the court of Rome, the bishop had

the mortification of finding his castle plundered and burnt, or the standard of the order floating from its towers, while the knights snapped their fingers at the papal bull, for Rome was a long way off, and the diocesans were very indifferent about the matter as long as they had no heavier tribute to pay.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the Estonians did not progress in religious knowledge; being very alert in purchasing indulgences at small prices on St. Peter's Eve and St. John's Eve, but in secret returning to the gods of their forefathers by many a secluded rock or lonely lake. The religion of the higher classes we need not inquire into, or we might be tempted to prefer the simple hind, who was made the beast of burden both of clergy and laity, and who in his idolatry had at all events the sentiment of antiquity on his side.

Meanwhile time was advancing, and as early as 1524 the new doctrines of Luther first began to be known. Fortunately at this time the Master of the Order, under which Estonia and

Livonia were now united, was one Walter von Plettenberg, afterwards Prince of the German Empire, an enlightened man, who endeavoured to mitigate the condition of the peasants, and wring some humane ordinances from their masters. He was himself favourable to the creed, and it spread rapidly among the lower orders; not, however, from any conviction of the superiority of this new form of worship, but from an utter and constantly maintained indifference to the old, and an apathy to all inquiry arising from their helpless state of servitude. The Reformation in Estonia was conducted without any signal disturbance; some of the Catholic bishops squared their consciences to the times; others were fortunate enough to sell their bishoprics to the King of Sweden; while others, who resisted, had their claims treated with forbearance. Some time, however, elapsed before the peasantry reaped any benefit. Preachers of the new religion were there, but generally unacquainted with the Estonian language, and, when pastors better versed arose, the poor serfs soon discovered that the old enemy had only

returned under a new face: religious instruction was as far from them as ever; the pastors led most disreputable lives, spending their days in journeying from one jovial table to another, and were elected by the *Landes Adel*, or nobility of the land, who held then, as they do now, the church property in their hands, without any reference to previous study or capacity. Meanwhile alternate civil war and pestilence drove even these from their abodes, and the serf's condition was more miserable than ever. It is true Luther sent a pastor to Reval with a letter of recommendation written by himself and Melancthon, which still exists in the church archives, but Reval was a distinct colony, and had no influence beyond its walls. As late even as 1654 some peasants endeavoured to revive the worship of their ancient deities; and their old Pagan sabbath, the Thursday, is still held holy by many.

In short—for I think you must tire of my lamentable church history—not until Estonia was safely gathered under the Russian sceptre was there any regular succession of church

ministry; since when, the establishment, such as it is, has been maintained in outward peace and order; the peasants have been instructed, and are become the zealous church-goers I describe. So much for the peasantry.

But now, if we look at the higher classes, we find them exactly in that relation to an insignificant, poverty-stricken church, whose ministers are as much beneath them in birth as in income, as might be expected. The pastors are respected as exercising a wholesome restraint over the lower orders, of which the upper ones reap the social benefit, are received with a proud kind of condescension at the table of the Count or Baron; and in their turn forbear all remonstrance against the widely spreading rationalism which infects the nobility, and of which in truth they themselves, in the capacity of family tutors, are too frequently the instillers. Upon the whole, here seems as great a need for the introduction of Christianity as ever; and, could Luther rise from his grave, he would find the Bible as strictly banished from this portion of a community professing his doctrines

as in the worst times of papal policy. Thus it is that the Lutheran religion, as established in these provinces, is a standing memorial of a reformation which, in its hurry to throw off the errors of the old system, has sacrificed also its truths, and a glaring instance of the inefficiency of a church unendowed with wealth, consequence, or dignity, among a class where such qualities are held in high estimation—and where are they not? For to what else can we attribute an indifference on the subject of revealed religion in a country which can as little boast a philosopher as it can a martyr?

But to return to the peasant. Beyond his strict adherence to his church we can find but little interesting in his character; nor indeed is it fair to look for any, excepting perhaps that of servile obedience or cunning evasion, among a people so long oppressed as the Estonian. How far, however, the influence of external circumstance is answerable for this is fully proved by the two distinct aspects which are to be found among the peasantry. On those estates—including unfortunately by far the

greater part of the province—which suffer a constant exchange of proprietors, and where no feelings of attachment between master and peasant have time to take root, or where feelings of an opposite nature are engendered by harsh and arbitrary treatment, we find the peasant a dull brute indeed; insensible to a kindness he mistrusts,—careless of improvement—improvident as the Irishman, without his wit—and phlegmatic as the German, without his industry. Rather than work beyond the minimum of his necessary *Corvéage*, he will starve. Provided he can have a pipe in his mouth, and lie sleeping at the bottom of his cart, while his patient wife drives the willing little rough horse, or, what is more frequent, while the latter will go right of itself, he cares little about an empty stomach. Offer him wages for his labour, and he will tell you, with the dullest bumpkin look, that if he works more he must eat more; and the fable of the belly and the members has here a different termination to what it had in our young days. On the other hand, on those few estates which have been occupied for several

generations by the same family, the peasants appear invariably an active, industrious, and prosperous set—attached to their lord, and ingenious in various trades. So much for the law of primogeniture;—a doctrine here hardly better understood than the apostolic succession. But what can a people know of real independence, living thus twofold under foreign subjection? In his very crimes the Estonian is a coward; he seldom gets beyond pilfering, and here makes a curious distinction—regarding it as no crime to steal that which cannot squeak or bleat in its own defence. Thus a pig or a sheep would be the height of iniquity, while a *Kümmet* of corn, or an *Eimer* of brandy, are very venial sins. Other crimes he has few, and murder is unknown. The penal list of this last year offers only eighty-seven misdemeanors in a population of above three hundred thousand peasants, and five of these consist merely in travelling without a passport. In this respect also the Estonian's conscience is so tender that the legislature allows no punishment to be enforced till a voluntary confes-

sion has been made—well knowing that no Estonian can be long without making a clean breast. Not so his lofty and lively neighbour, the Russian; whose legislature might whistle for his voluntary confession. Serf though he be, he is a very Saracen in independence; and his list of crimes would make a wild Newgate Calendar. The same conscientiousness, however, which opens the Estonian's heart under sense of delinquency, steels it in moments of danger. No soldier in the Russian army stands a charge better than the contemned *Tchuchonn*. But now I have kept you standing long enough in the cold church, and the obsequious *Küster*, or clerk, wonders what we can be about—and in truth I am weary also.

LETTER THE TENTH.

Similarity between old England and Estonia—Frequent transfer of estates—The *Credit-Casse*—History of M. de Berg—The *Ritterschaft*—The *Land-Tag*—Preparations for removal to Reval—Winter travelling costume of a child—Journey—Reval.

BEFORE my acquaintance with Estonia commenced, I had in my ignorance imagined the love and habit of a country residence to be exclusively confined to our own favoured land, where a sturdy race, attached to the pleasures of the country, and scorning the dissipation and dependence of the court and capital, has ever existed. France has no country gentlemen —Germany none—Italy none. It is therefore the more pleasing to see the life of our old-fashioned country gentry somewhat imaged in that of the present Estonian noblesse ;—the same attention to agricultural pursuits—the same local importance—the same discharge of

the magisterial duties which a country life imposes—and the same hospitality to all around them; equally as brave when their bravery is required, equally as slothful while peaceful occasion permits. If we could but add attachment to a church, the right of primogeniture, and a sense of independence—the three primary colours, it is true, of this picture—the likeness would be complete. Perhaps a habit of grumbling at the government might be quoted as another item of similarity—the peg whereon the Estonians hang their yet well-lined, but somewhat threadbare, nationality. For, though the Russian sceptre is the first under which they have enjoyed the blessings of peace and order, yet a regular catalogue of prosy murmurs is indulged in, which must be considered rather as a welcome topic in a somewhat barren field of conversation than as any symptom of disaffection, for no subjects in the Empire have proved themselves more brave and loyal when put to the test.

The province of Estonia is divided into about six hundred estates, where the sin of absenteeism

is rare, for the landholder generally lives on his own property, and devotes himself to its superintendence. In old times this was little more than nominal—wants were fewer, the population scantier, and competition unknown; and frequently the landholder let one-half of his estate lie fallow or unredeemed,—a custom not quite obsolete yet,—fully satisfied with the ample return of the rest. Now, however, an increasing plentifulness of money having brought down the rate of interest, and the introduction of new systems having excited a slight degree of competition, woods are stumped up—new land cleared—the peasantry, who are much more ignorant of their own rights than their masters, drained of their resources, or, if the estate be in more enlightened hands, extra labour is engaged for wages; while some of the younger nobility, who have travelled to their own profit, are slowly recurring to the aid of science to supply the deficiency of hands. One evil, however, attending this increased activity is the incessant transfer of estates I have alluded to. Money cannot circulate

through too many hands for the public good, nor land through too few: therefore, the barter of these immense estates—some of them embracing as much as a hundred square miles of territory, which is looked upon in the light of a speculation in which all are eager to engage, and for which but few possess the necessary capital—is a great disadvantage to the classes beneath them, and a very questionable benefit to their own. For at best, if the estate prove profitable and the debts incurred on it be defrayed, the death of the proprietor, and the necessity of dividing the property, throw it again into the market. It cannot be said, however, that the wholesome system of a monopoly of land is wholly unknown, for about three entailed estates, *Majorats Güter*, as they are called, exist in Estonia, and with manifest advantage to the families themselves, and to every class of peasantry upon them.

The Emperor—who doubtless foresees the hopelessness of rearing a middle class, or of reforming the higher, until the waste branches of a most prolific nobility be forced into a more

active sphere, and all the strength and consequence of the family thrown into one leading head—is greatly in favour of entailed estates; and report speaks of a new and higher patent of nobility projected for those whose means and good sense may equally induce them to found these strongholds of national prosperity. And, being in his imperial person greatly the gainer by this incessant shifting of land—for on each fresh purchase of an estate a tax amounting to four per cent. upon the whole sum paid, called a *Poschlin*, reverts to the crown—there can be no question of the disinterestedness of his Majesty's desire. In order to evade this tax, estates were formerly pledged for the term of ninety-nine years, but this subterfuge is now only availing for nine years, not renewable, at the expiration of which, unless the sale be ratified and his Majesty's *Poschlin* discharged, the contract is considered void.

An interesting instance of this kind occurred recently here.—A widow and four children, left in circumstances unusually limited, were reduced to the necessity of selling a favourite

estate which their family had occupied for centuries—and, furthermore, at a time most disadvantageous for the sale of landed property. Through successive years and alternations of fortune, the remembrance of their dearly-loved home was cherished, as of a paradise, whence poverty, not sin, had driven them. At the expiration of nine years the purchaser, a strange opinionated man, was warned to pay his *Poschlin;* a tenth elapsed, and an eleventh began, when government interfered, the trustees of the family stepped forward, and the lone widow, whose worldly circumstances had prospered in the interim, and her children, now grown to man and woman's estate, resumed their family residence with feelings not to be described.

In consequence of a great depression of the agricultural interest—for Estonia has known her years of panic as well as ourselves—and the absence of the necessary capital to weather these bad times, the market was at one time absolutely drugged with a number of noble estates, which went begging for purchasers. To counteract an evil which threatened the

stability of the whole province, a bank was formed, which, assisted by a loan from government, advanced money in the form of a mortgage, at five per cent. to every needy landholder. This plan was attended with such distinguished benefit to the country, that soon the *Credit Casse*, as it is termed, had claims upon almost every estate in the province, and itself bought up those estates which otherwise might have fallen, at one-third of their value, into the hands of adventurers or foreigners. In most cases the mortgage is still retained, as allowing the command of a surplus capital to improve the estate, or otherwise to speculate with, and also as offering a facility of sale. Meanwhile the bank itself has proved a most prosperous undertaking, and thus, holding every estate more or less in its grasp, presents a centre of stability which no casual bad season can overthrow. More than once has it been most severely tried, especially under the government of the late Emperor Alexander, who advanced it a million of silver roubles, at a time when the current value of this coin did not exceed two

roubles paper; engaging his imperial word that on repayment the silver rouble should be accepted at the same rate of value. In a few years the silver rouble mounted to four roubles paper, when, to the consternation of the Credit Casse, the government exacted full value. The *Ritterschaft* tried every measure to obtain justice—was referred from the sovereign to the minister, from the minister to the senate—and at length dismissed with the admonition of having "carried their petition to impertinence," and Estonia was obliged to pay.

This excellent institution was mainly suggested and founded by an individual to whom a strange course of misfortune has since given an additional celebrity. M. de Berg was a noble of large landed property, high in repute, and holding some of the chief offices of the province. Being on a visit to Petersburg, this gentleman was requested by a merchant there, carrying on a considerable business with Reval in the brandy-trade, to take charge of a very large sum due to a house at Reval. To this he assented, and left Petersburg with the

money in his possession. Arriving in Reval, upon application being made by the creditor, M. Berg, to the astonishment of all parties, simply and solemnly averred that the sum in question was no longer in his hands, and that, though his utter ruin and disgrace must ensue, nothing should induce him to account for its disappearance. The news of this most strange declaration from one of her most trusted members burst like a thunderclap through the province, and such was the horror felt by his fellow-nobles that the money was replaced in a few hours. Time was allowed him, and the persuasions of his family and friends resorted to, to elicit the truth; but he merely repeated the same tale, acknowledged his position in its full light, and was otherwise silent. The sale of his fine estates now followed—his name was struck off the roll of matriculated nobility—himself degraded from all his posts, and reduced with his family to the utmost indigence. This happened thirty years ago, and the individual in question, now just eighty years of age, having never deviated from the course of rectitude

which characterised him before his disgrace, has gradually regained the esteem and confidence of his fellow-nobility. But the mystery which cost him so dear remains with him, nor will it be disclosed until after his death.

The Ritterschaft, or senate, consists of the collected matriculated nobility of this province —each landholder among them having a vote —at the head of whom is a dignitary elected by the body, called the *Ritterschafts-Hauptmann*, or, as it is termed in French, *le Maréchal de la Noblesse*—an office of great antiquity—whose functions continue for three years, and consist in maintaining the rights of the body, in presenting petitions to the crown, and in entering into contracts with the same for the sale of their home commodities, which, such as brandy and corn, are bought up by the crown itself, &c. To hear therefore a statement of his administration, to receive the resignation of the old Ritterschafts-Hauptmann, and to place the staff of honour in the hands of a new one elected from among themselves—to fill up the gap which death may have occasioned in a

body of twelve judges, called *Land Räthe*, whose office is for life—to reappoint the eleven *Haken-richters*, an active magistracy for the different districts of Estonia, also renewable every three years,—in short, to attend to a vast number of matters connected with their internal administration,—a so-called *Land-Tag* (a miniature representation of the ancient German *Reich's Tag*, where princes and bishops of the Empire presided, and sovereigns were elected) is held triennially in the month of February in Reval. On this occasion all the nobility flock thither, and the little capital becomes the centre equally of amusement and business. The present February bringing with it a recurrence of this Land-Tag, we all prepared to remove to Reval.

These removals are no slight undertakings. Provision has to be taken for those who go, and provision portioned out for those who stay. The hayloft, the cellar, the larder, and the dairy have all to be transported, and the wardrobe, important as it may be, becomes a very minor consideration. Therefore, peasants with

well-stored carts are sent beforehand to creep at a snail's pace to Reval; servants that can be spared are despatched to make all ready; and lastly, the *Herrschaft*, or family of the Seigneur, prepare to follow.

On the evening of the 20th of February, N.S., all the juvenile portion of the family were consigned to rest at an earlier hour than usual, and by six o'clock the next morning little eyes were wide awake, and little limbs in full motion, by the flickering candle's light—in everybody's way as long as they were not wanted, and nowhere to be found when they were. At length the little flock were all assembled, and, having been well lined inside by a migratory kind of breakfast, the outer process began. This is conducted somewhat on the same principle as the building of a house—the foundations being filled with rather rubbishy materials, over which a firm structure is reared. First came a large cotton handkerchief—then a pelisse, three years too short—then a faded comfortable of papa's, and then an old cachemire of mamma's, which latter was with difficulty forced under the vanishing arms

and tied firmly behind. Now each tiny hand was carefully sealed with as many pairs of gloves as could be gathered together for the occasion,—one hand (for the nursemaids are not very particular) being not seldom more richly endowed in this respect than its fellow. The same process is applied to the little feet, which swell to misshapen stumps beneath an accumulation of under-socks and over-socks, under-shoes and over-boots, and are finally swallowed up in huge worsted stockings, which embrace all the drawers, short petticoats, ends of handkerchiefs, comfortables, and shawls they can reach, and are generally gartered in some incomprehensible fashion round the waist. But mark!—this is only the foundation. Now comes the thickly-wadded winter pelisse, of silk or merinos, with bands and ligatures which instantly bury themselves in the depths of the surrounding hillocks, till within the case of clothes before you, which stands like a roll-pudding tied up ready for the boiler, no one would suspect the slender skipping sprite that your little finger can lift with ease. And

lastly, all this is enveloped in the little jaunty silk cloak, which fastens readily enough round the neck on ordinary occasions, but now refuses to meet by the breadth of a hand, and is made secure by a worsted boa of every bright colour.

Is this all? No—wait. I have forgotten the pretty clustering locked head, and rosy dimpled face; and in truth they were so lost in the mountains of wool and wadding around as to be fairly overlooked. Here a handkerchief is bound round the forehead, and another down each cheek, just skirting the nose, and allowing a small triangular space for sight and respiration—talking had better not be attempted—while the head is roofed in by a wadded hat—a misshapen machine with soft crown and bangled peak, which can't be hurt, and never looks in order, over which are suspended as many veils—green, white, and black—as mamma's cast-off stores can furnish, through which the brightest little pair of eyes in the world faintly twinkle like stars through a mist. And now one touch upsets the whole mass,

and a man-servant coolly lifts it up in his arms like a bale of goods and carries it off to the sledge.

It was a lovely morning as we started with our little monstrosities—ourselves in a commodious covered sledge—various satellites of the family in a second, followed up by rougher vehicles, covered with bright worsted rugs, and driven by the different grades of servants, wherein sat the muffled and closely-draped lady's-maids and housemaids of the establishment—not to forget the seigneur himself, who, wrapped to the ears, sat in solitude, driving a high-mettled animal, upon a sledge so small as to be entirely concealed by his person, so that to all appearance he seemed to be gliding away upon his own Baronial base, and only attached to the horse by the reins in his well-guarded hands.

The way led through noble woods of Scotch and spruce fir, sometimes catching sight of a lofty mansion of stone, or passing a low thatched building of wood with numberless little sash-windows, where some of the nobles

still reside, and which are the remnants of more simple times. And now "the sun rose clear o'er trackless fields of snow," and our solitary procession jingled merrily on, while, yielding to the lulling sounds of the bells, our little breathing bundles sank motionless and warm into our laps, and retrieved in happy slumbers the early *escapades* of the day. There is no such a warming-pan on a cold winter's journey as a lovely soft child.

After driving thirty wersts we stopped at the half-way house of an acquaintance, for here the willing hospitality of some brother-noble is often substituted for the miserable road-side accommodations. This was one of those wooden houses I have mentioned, and infinitely more pleasing within than without —divided with partitions like the tray of a work-box, and fitted up with every accommodation on a small scale:—a retreat which some unambitious pair might prefer to the palace we had quitted. After a few hours' rest we started again with the same horses, which here perform journeys of sixty wersts

in the day with the utmost ease; and when evening was far advanced our little travellers pushed aside their many-coloured veils, and peeped at the lamps with astonished eyes, as we clattered up the steep hill which led to our residence in Reval.

LETTER THE ELEVENTH.

Sudden transformation in the outer man—Humours of the Land-Tag—Society in Reval—Peculiar formality—Facility of divorce—Early marriages—Baroness J.—Mademoiselle de P.—M. G.—Mademoiselle de V.—Count M.—Baron C.—Beauty of Estonian women—General reading—The *Adeliche* and the *Bürgerliche*—Theatre—Griseldis.

It is astonishing the transformation which this removal to town produces upon the outer man. The good, busy, housekeeping soul settles into the modern woman of fashion; the dressing-gowned, slippered country gentleman brushes up into the modern man of the world, and calls and balls, theatre and club-house, replace the quiet routine of the country life. The equipages undergo the same change. The smart town sledge, an open vehicle of graceful form, stands at our door. The horses have ex-

changed their rusty leather trappings for glossy suits of harness, studded with bright plates of brass or silver. The coachman has doffed his coat of friar's grey for one of bishop's purple, confined by a silken belt of rainbow dyes which many a slenderer waist might envy, and surmounted by a scarlet cloth, or black beaver cap with silver tassel and band; while the little postilion, hitherto a bare-legged stable-boy, sits proudly on the foremost pair, a perfect miniature of the same. Four horses abreast are no longer seen, for the ancient narrow streets of Reval refuse to admit so broad a phalanx, and, excepting at the hill-gate, all travelling equipages on entering the town are obliged to unharness one of their number.

And now came the morning calls, and the new faces, and the long names, while, as the first act of duty, we paid our homages to the Governor and his lady at the Castle, who king and queen it in little Reval. And then followed the invitations, seldom given more than two or three days beforehand, and the morning and evening engagements,—for the two o'clock dinner-party

is quite distinct from the evening amusement. At the former the business of the Land-Tag is discussed, with observations on the late Ritterschafts-Hauptmann, and conjectures as to his successor, with reports of some new and beneficial measure, and energetic denunciations of some insidious Russian innovation, intermixed with humorous accounts of the blunder of one member, or the break-down of another,—or how some young noble, never before supposed to wear a tongue, had spoken very much to the purpose,—or how some old noble, never before supposed to wear a heart, had shed tears of patriotic emotion.

The chief houses which receive in Reval are, foremost, the Castle of the Governor, where a universal and constant hospitality is maintained; the house of Count Heiden, Port Admiral of Reval, of Navarino celebrity, an honest old Dutchman, speaking English perfectly well, and with all the frankness of the English Navy; Baroness Üxcüll's, and Baron Stackelberg's. These all regularly light their magnificent saloons and throw open their doors once a-week;

while invitations on these occasions are passed round by word of mouth, and not by any printed form. All here are upon a perfect equality; rich and poor; so that they be but *noble*—are bidden alike, and no creditor and debtor account kept between those who invite and those who accept. Altogether the kindest feeling pervades the whole body of nobility, who are all known and many related to each other. Ostentation and competition for fashion are unheard of, though the strictest fashion is observed in dress and entertainments; all parties are conducted with easy courtesy and simplicity; and, were it not for the freezing system of separation and formality which pervades the members of the society itself, and which unfortunately has not been left behind them in the country, Reval would be more attractive than many a capital ten times its size. But a spell seems to hang over both man and woman: the best elements of society are at their disposal—splendid rooms—excellent lighting—throngs of attendants—charming music—and the choicest of refreshments; but the gentlemen

occupy several apartments with their thronged card-tables, and the ladies sit, stand, or walk about the rest, and, though all imbued with the very spirit of courtesy and good humour, it must be owned, get at length a little tired of one another's company. Or, if sufficient gentlemen can be seduced from the whist or boston tables to form a dance, the cavalier abstains from fetching his lady till the moment the music begins, and remorselessly casts her off the moment it finishes, leaving her to thread her timid way through files of company to the distant corner where her chaperon is seated, and, once free, never approaches her again. Which party is in fault? It is hard to suppose that Estonia's sons are either "so good or so cold" as not to care for the society of a fair and agreeable woman; and it is equally unjust to asperse her daughters with having wearied them of that which they have so little opportunity of bestowing. The ladies impugn the gentlemen, who, to speak candidly, show no desire to break through these imaginary boundaries, for, if but two meet in the same room,

they invariably sit together, or walk together, or smoke together, or in some such way illustrate their principles of strict decorum;—though instances have occurred of an individual who, betrayed singly into the ladies' camp, with no resource but to make the best of it, has exerted so much philosophy as to deceive them into a belief of his having enjoyed their company. The gentlemen at the same time throw the blame upon the lady, who, though easy, courteous, and communicative to her own sex, immediately acts on the defensive as a gentleman approaches, and endeavours by every tacit means to proclaim that she is inaccessibly honest, while, as he has no intention of disputing the fact, the gentleman retires rather than encounter barricades so unsuited to the occasion, and is in no hurry to renew the attempt. "How can a woman be approached," said a shrewd travelled Estonian to me, "who carries *sa vertu* in large letters about her? Our ladies mistake the matter: there 's as little need for them to wear this outwardly in society as for your Queen to wear her crown."

But while they are disputing the point the impartial looker-on can only bear witness that in the present state of things the fault seems pretty equal, though of the original delinquents no doubt can remain; for no aspect of society, however perverted or however depraved, should undermine the firm belief that woman, both immediately and ultimately, is its arbitress and lawgiver. Woman is the priestess of that holy temple, home. She it is who throws its gates open and bids man enter —not vice versâ; and hers is the high calling to influence his conduct whilst there. It may be difficult to stem those habits which the errors of a grandmother-generation have bequeathed, but this does not invalidate the first principle.

Another social evil of far more vital importance, and which seems strangely inconsistent with the strict separation of the two sexes in society, is the facility of divorce under the Lutheran church law. Besides the various other reasons, an incompatibility of temper and mutually avowed dislike are here admitted as

sufficient grounds for severing those whom "no man may sunder;" and it is a melancholy proof, to say no worse, of the inexpedience of this law, and its direct tendency to discourage all salutary self-control and forbearance, that divorces are seldom here obtained for any graver reason. Several wretched instances could be quoted, within the sphere of my own knowledge, of parties thus severed for trivial causes, who impugned the tie for that which lay in their own wilful natures, and hastily loosened the one instead of controlling the other; but who, sobered and punished by time, have cursed their second thoughtless act more than they did their first. But it would be little interesting to detail those miseries which selfish man and unwise woman entail on themselves and all connected with them, since, however differently the law may favour or check, such unfortunately are peculiar to no country. The heart alone knoweth its own bitterness; but there are sorrows invested with the poetry of imagination, the luxury of melancholy, or the holiness of resig-

nation—sorrows the most real, and yet the most palatable. The disappointed affections hug their own griefs with jealous exclusiveness—the bereaved mother or wife loves her sorrow as she did its object; each mourns as those who "have reason to be fond of grief:" but who finds a melancholy charm in those vexations which arise from awkward tempers, awkward manners, and the thousand needless perversities with which mankind voluntarily flagellate themselves? who sees any poetic beauty in those accumulated molehills of self-created cares of which human nature, cursed in its own choice, at length makes mountains never to be o'erpassed? And the evils resulting from these froward, untangible causes are immeasurably more unbearable than those direct inflictions of Providence which find an affinity with the soul. Those who rail at poetry and refinement as superfluous ingredients in every-day happiness little know what main props they would undermine. These will abide when principles waver:—these open the heart and close the lips intui-

tively at the right time:—these prevent when all the good institutions in the world could not remedy. Manly delicacy is as necessary in family life as manly rectitude, and womanly tact as womanly virtue. There is as much happiness wrecked from the absence of the one as of the other—and perhaps more. Those who neglect the varnishes of life commit an insidious sin towards themselves; and these lie in the mind, and not, as sometimes supposed, in the purse.

To this laxity of church law may also in great measure be ascribed the prejudicial system of early marriages in Estonia—for vows that can be easily renounced will be also lightly taken. In old times marriages were frequently contracted on the woman's side as early as at fourteen years of age; and a grandmother of thirty was no rare occurrence. In Russia the same custom prevailed; but now, by the Greek church law, no woman can marry until turned seventeen. In Estonia, however, marriages of sixteen still frequently occur,—a circumstance which may be assigned as one

reason for the languor and insipidity of the general society. With all her energies cast into one anxious channel by the duties of a family—with her health generally undermined, and all improvement and self-knowledge effectually arrested—thrown into a position in society for which her age and girlish diffidence equally unfit her, and perhaps with the fear of a criticising spouse before her eyes—the tender Estonian matron, with no confidence either in her own powers or her own resources, hopes to screen all deficiencies behind the strictest observance of punctilio, and rests her pretensions to consideration upon the scrupulous fulfilment of the law.

Another drawback to society consequent on this system is, that these timid leaders, these juvenile elders, not content with bringing dulness in their own persons, rigorously exact it from others, and are generally much more censorious than older matrons upon those of their own sex who venture to be livelier, or wiser, or to have seen more of the world without marriage than they have with it. On this

account any clever girl with more wit or sense than her fellows had better look about her ere she venture to evince it; for Reval, like other small towns, lacks not of those "idle moths" of both sexes "who eat an honest name;" and wrong terms are given to innocent actions, and double meanings to innocent words; and many a fair creature is left a standing warning to others of the Spartan rigour of the Estonian gentlemen towards those who are so heedless as to show character before they have secured an establishment. For this reason the proprieties of a soirée are only occasionally enlivened by a more animated *Frau*, or a less cautious *Fräulein*, who, having passed the age of hope, here a very limited one, dares now openly to display the liveliness which has cost her so dear; while the young ladies, most wise in seeming most dull, seldom venture beyond the commonplace.

Among these former the most conspicuous are the Baroness J., who in every party gathers a crowd of delighted listeners about her—

amusing the old gentlemen with her wit, reproving the young fops with her satire, and charming all with her good sense; Madlle. de P., whose nature is the happiest union of poetry, pleasantry, and feeling, who delights in old romance and lore, and knows more of the history and tradition of her own country than any other of its children; and Madlle. de V., with eyes like planets, and a fascination of manners and person—a *je ne sais quoi*—which no one can resist, who shrugs the loveliest shoulders in the world, and prettily disclaims all talent and learning, but utters sentiments more apposite than any school could teach.

And among the gentlemen who weave a few bright colours into this sober-coloured web, whose natural wit, or love of easy praise, or good sense, or vanity, lead them to forsake the beaten path and venture into more pleasant ways, may be reckoned M. G., who goes about with cynical looks and merry conceits, and makes more debts than he can pay, and more puns than can be repeated; and has

reason to love his wit, for it has stood him in the stead of many a better thing.

And Count M., whose timidity keeps pace with his fancy; who cannot resist making people laugh, but blushes proportionally for having done so; and, unfortunately for himself, is not able to articulate his humorous sayings by proxy, having precisely that species which would lose in any other mouth.

And lastly, Baron C., who has the shrewdest sense, the liveliest wit, the brightest face, and the loudest laugh in the province. With him wit enters into the very constitution of the man. He revenges his wrongs with a satire, despatches his business with a bon-mot—spends precious sparkling ideas alike on his farming bailiff and on his brother-noble — alienates his friends for the sake of a pun, captivates his enemies by the same process—and, what is more extraordinary than all, minds the main chance better than any other man in Estonia. Wherever his face appears, dullness is taken by the shoulders and thrust out of doors. His repu-

tation dies and revives with each season—at one time he is branded as the most audacious young scamp living, at another eulogised as the very best fellow in the world, while he, with happy boldness, is equally indifferent to either. Those who determine beforehand not to like him, end by becoming his warmest friends; and those who spoiled him at first, his bitterest enemies. Unincumbered with the slightest portion of mauvaise honte or reserve, no man better understands setting down an inferior, or—dictating to a superior.

Under his auspices a band of kindred spirits has been formed, who, coalescing with the whimsical and inventive merriment of their leader, have bound themselves to go about circulating reports of marriage in behalf of despairing damsels—reports of *Korbs* or refusals, in ridicule of arrogant swains,—fomenting quarrels or abetting reconciliations wherever it suits their caprice or purpose; and, above all, for this is their chief aim and motive, repairing all awkward flaws of their own characters by *speaking well of each other*. In

this respect, however, some of the members, it is said, have so far overshot the intention of the order as to go about speaking well of *themselves*—to the unspeakable glee, as it may be imagined, of their mischievous leader, who, in the rich harvest of mirth which these dauntless contrivances of his merry brain bring in, is doubly delighted when he can levy tribute from any of his own disciples. With such helps as these, society is made to move at rather a brisker pace, greatly to the scandal of some very demure ladies, whose weak side, however, Baron C., with the confidence of one who possesses equal animal spirits, ready repartee, great tact, and no scruples, promises to undermine.

The Estonian ladies have beautiful complexions and splendid heads of hair, both of which are most carefully tended from their infancy. Their *chevelure* especially is never allowed to be cut from its earliest growth, and the most massive coils of glossy hair, here a universal natural ornament, richly repay this care. The figures of the unmarried women

are also fine, though, did it not appear almost hypercritical, I could add that their waists are too slender for beauty. Small and beautifully formed hands are also a prevailing feature. When dressed at all they are incomparably better dressed, more fashionably, and more *fraiche*, which is a sine quâ non here, than our less careful belles, though on common occasions the remark may be reversed. Diamonds and other precious stones are seen in profusion, and no substitute ever appears. The only conspicuous defect is, like the American beauties, a prevalence of bad teeth. Moore's words were constantly recalled to my mind:—

> "What pity, blooming girl! that lips so ready for a lover,
> Should not beneath their ruby casket cover
> One tooth of pearl:
> But, like a rose beside a churchyard stone,
> Be doom'd to blush o'er many a mouldering bone."

This is the more observable because here the lowest peasant can neither speak nor smile without displaying rows of pearls as even as white, while many of the higher classes

scarcely relax in expression but at the risk of disclosing ruins of every form and colour.

The general reading of these classes is confined to the lighter works of the day—modern French novels and German translations of our English ones find their way here; while, in curious opposition, the newest German infidelities circulate side by side with Dunallan and other similar evangelical works of our present generation. Bulwer is universally read, and looked upon as the strict standard of English taste and principle; and I am sorry to add that his countrywoman played him false, and thought it her duty to shake these opinions by every fair argument in her power.

It can hardly be said that a pride of nobility is observable among this class, but this rather arises from the absence of all possible collision with those beneath them, and from a happy security of their own power. For the Estonian nobility, having undisputed way, have established a set of customs and opinions which effectually interdicts all approach between the

Adeliche, or noble, and the *Bürgerliche,* or commoner, either in society or family connexion. In both these respects the line of demarcation is drawn more strictly than at the present times in Germany. I once proposed to a young Estonian Baron, low in fortunes, and by no means indemnified by Nature's gifts, to bestow his hand and title upon the daughter of a merchant in Reval, famed alike for her great beauty, talents, and wealth—assuring him in return of the everlasting gratitude of herself and her relations; but the young Baron did not relish the joke, and I found myself on tender ground.

The little German theatre here proves a most agreeable diversion. We engaged a box for the season, and are glad whenever the many hospitable houses leave an evening free. Without attempting too much, the modest German company, most respectable in performance, give us selections from Kotzebue, from Iffland, &c.; but a piece recently dramatised, called Griseldis, is more attractive than all, and draws most sympathising au-

diences. This is taken from the same old German legend which I conclude furnished our ancient ballad of the patient Griselda, with a slight alteration of the *dénouement*. The drama, however, is laid in the times of our national character, King Arthur.

The hero, Percival, is one of the chief nobles of his court, and the heroine, Griseldis, has, on account of her beauty and virtue, been taken from a lowly woodman's hut to grace his castle. Knowing his wife to be the very mirror of excellence, Percival leaves her to repair to King Arthur's court, where, taunted by some with her low birth, by others with possessing a diamond which he is afraid to display, he boasts that, though his wife be a woodman's daughter, she surpasses in obedience and every wifely sense of duty all the high-born ladies of the court. This so stings the queen herself, a bad designing woman, who in vain lays siege to Percival's faith, that she offers to do homage on her knees to this peasant-born countess, and to proclaim her best among women, if her obedience prove superior to every

trial; but, if Griseldis fail, exacts the same homage from the haughty Percival to herself. This rouses Percival's vanity, and, confident of his wife's principles, and careless of her sufferings, he accepts the gage. Two courtiers chosen as witnesses to this conjugal ordeal now accompany him to his castle. Here an unforeseen occasion for trial immediately presents itself; Griseldis's old mother on her deathbed sends a messenger to the castle to summon her daughter, if not grown unmindful in her present exaltation, to come and receive her last blessing. Griseldis sues to Percival for leave to fulfil this act of piety, which Percival, thinking only of his bond, denies, and forbids her to leave the castle—Griseldis obeys. Percival then asks for their only child, a babe in the cradle. "The king wants it," he coolly says, and gives it to the courtiers. "The king want my child!" screams Griseldis with a mother's agony, and is rushing to seize it from their grasp, when Percival restrains her, and gives her to understand that such is his will. Griseldis obeys. In the next scene

he bids the great hall be prepared—calls together his dependents and vassals, and now commands his countess to put off her splendid robes—to unbind the jewels from her hair, and return to his presence in the russet petticoat, loose tresses, and bare feet, with which he first saw her—Griseldis obeys. Now turning to the assembly, he says, "Thus you saw this woman enter my castle; this was her condition when she became your mistress; to that let her return—conduct her beyond the castle gates and give her neither food nor shelter on your allegiance." Griseldis attempts no remonstrance, save her tears; weeping she bids her lord adieu, passes meekly through the throng, and goes barefooted forth. A storm of thunder and lightning now bursts over the scene, but still she pursues her forlorn way, till torn and exhausted she reaches the home of her girlhood. Here her father, pointing to the dead body of her mother, upbraids her with neglect of filial duty, conveys to her a maternal curse instead of a blessing, and, further incensed by beholding her in this

degraded condition, stigmatizes her as the most worthless of women, and drives her from his hut. Now is poor Griseldis poor indeed; overcome with hunger and wretchedness she lays herself down on a stone to die, which so touches the old man's heart, that he consents to receive her. And thus she lives, resuming her hard labour and her hard fare, praying to God for her husband and child, and fading away beneath her griefs. Three months elapse and Griseldis appears in the same russet garb, pale and wan, when a horn is heard, and the king and the queen and all the court, with Percival in the midst, crowd into the lonely valley. Griseldis looks and listens in speechless amazement as Percival explains how all this suffering has been but a trial of her duty, which having abided the sharpest proof, the queen here falls on her knees and owns her peerless among women. And now Percival, with a face radiant with gratified pride, bids her return to his castle and resume her sway over him and all his possessions. But Griseldis, with an unutterable expression of woe,

here lifts up her voice: "Percival, thou art lost to me for ever. God knows that I would have borne humiliation, torture, death in any shape for thy good—that I have suffered grief, degradation, and hardship—have taught my hands again to labour, and have washed my bread with tears at thy bidding, without a complaint. But to know that thou hast wrung thy wife's tenderest feelings, that thou hast loaded my heart with a dying mother's curse, hast turned my raven locks to grey, and taught me in a few months an eternity of misery—and that all this wretchedness has been but to prove my duty to the world—but to gratify thy vanity!—this, this it is that breaks my heart. What is a queen's homage to me when Percival has lost my esteem! Ask me not to return. My mother's spectre would rise between us. I should despise myself for following the weakness of my affection, and thou wouldest despise me for loving one I had ceased to revere. No—ask me not—it cannot be. Let me remain with him who pitied me when I seemed most guilty. Farewell, my

Percival; cherish our child, and tell him that his mother died. Come father"—and so saying, Griseldis resists every solicitation, and, weeping, leaves the scene.

This dénouement is the theme of all conversation, and parties run high for and against its moral. Some little patient Griseldises of the society blame their prototype for not returning, and some selfish Percivals acquit her, and vice versâ. I venture no opinion.

Count M. wiped his eyes and hoped they made it up behind the scenes.

LETTER THE TWELFTH.

Acquirement of Languages—Sascha—Position and local peculiarities of Reval—Its winter beauties—The Domberg—Thermometer twenty-five degrees below zero—Charac teristics of intense cold—Characteristics of Count ——— —Marriages de Convenance—Lutheran wedding.

THE best souvenir the traveller can carry away of a foreign country, better than journal or sketch-book, is a knowledge of its language. The adaptation between the sounds and the movements,—the idiom and the impulses of a people, are so intimate;—the prevalence of the passionate, the profound, the malleable, or the vigorous, conspicuous in the language so commensurate with that manifested in the character of a nation, that any attempt to decipher the one without the aid of the other would lead to results either barren or false.

However philologically interesting to trace in its connexion with other Finnish dialects, or even with those of a Celtic origin, the Estonian language in itself offers no reward for the present, and no promise for the future. And though in my day I shall as little see the Russian language as the Russian people in full exercise or maturity of their energies, yet there is pleasure in studying the character of the child in whom a high and growing destiny is apparent.

In other words, this weighty argument to simple conclusion, this "noisy flourish to puny purpose," is the reason for my devoting the spare minutes of our life of busy idleness to the study of Russian; and further why, from this triune colony of Estonians, Germans, and Russians, who possess Reval, I have thought fit to select an handmaiden of the last-mentioned nation, outwardly to assist in qualifying me for the strict toilette requirements of Reval society, and inwardly to indulge that comfortable feeling, known under varying aspects to all who know themselves, of screening an indul-

gence beneath the pretext of a task. Upon our arrival, therefore, the establishment was increased by the presence of a rather pretty, and very demure young lady, who, though the daughter of an *unter Offizier*, a name adopted and nasalised in the Russian service, condescends for certain considerations to act as my tire-woman. Towards the other servants, the general circumstance of her Russian birth, as well as the special one of her family elevation, forbids all approach on her side. It is true she speaks not a word of their language, nor of any other, save her own; but this is a trifling impediment compared with the disdain with which a Russian of any degree regards the *Tchuchonn*, whose Lutheran faith he would as soon adopt as his *po-Tchuchonski* tongue, and who returns the compliment pretty much in the same coin; for the vilest stigma one Estonian can throw on another, is to say, "your heart is Russian." In short they asperse and despise one another as much as contiguous nations always do. Under these circumstances, Sascha, for such is the name of

my new Russian Grace, has at present rather a lonely life of it; my communications being limited to little more than "nods and becks, and wreathed smiles," and, therefore, excepting an occasional torrent of eloquence with which she indemnifies herself for her silence in the work-room, and inundates her lady-disciple, and where it is well if after the first three words the latter do not find herself out of her depth, she preserves a stateliness and mute dignity highly edifying to the simpler members of the establishment.

How striking it is that the process of learning a language in riper years should be the same as that of acquiring speech in infancy! The stammerer of a new tongue, like the child first essaying to speak, invariably begins by mastering good, solid, substantial substantives, then a few indispensable adjectives, and the important doctrine of "my and thy." But here succeeds a short pause, for the ever-varying verb is difficult of seizure, and adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions, those bonds of connexion, come halting slowly in, and generally in the

wrong place. At first it seems folly to suppose that the same treacherous memory which at the commencement can scarce retain six new words a day, should eventually master the requisite thousands: but after a time words beget words, as money begets money. Those there are which, once heard, by some indefinable association are never forgotten, while others are off and on in the memory countless times ere she succeeds in binding them fast. The Russian language, to judge from this stage of process, is not more intricate than the German, though probably the easier for following in the track of such a predecessor. As to the pronunciation, this is a separate thing. No Russian allows that a foreigner can acquire it save from his nurse. Childhood once past, it is as "the desire of the moth for the star;" but to my view, though it may seem a paradoxical assertion, the precise articulation of a language is the least important part. Our lessons usually occur morning and evening, when I sit and clip the emperor's Russian without the slightest remorse, and Sascha

either *coiffes* or *decoiffes*, and is far less amused at this laceration of her native tongue than the perpetrator herself. For, like the French, the Russians forbid themselves all enjoyment of a foreigner's blunders, a species of ridicule which, dispassionately considered, is the most involuntary, most venial, and least personal existing.

Meanwhile the season by no means impedes our both reconnoitring and recognising the picturesque beauties of Reval, which, in their summer dress, attract many a visitor. Reval itself is divided into two distinct portions, the lower town, and the upper, or *Domberg* (Dome-hill), so called from the Dome or cathedral church, which consists in a circular reef of lofty rocks about a mile in circumference, rising like a vast citadel, and is occupied by the castle of the governor and the residences of the nobility—no *Unadeliche*, or not noble, being privileged to possess ground on the aristocratic Domberg. Here the picturesque remains of massive walls and towers which continue the line of elevation to a giddy height,

and rival the rocks as much in solidity as in time-worn hue, engross a considerable portion of the outer ring, the remaining segment being possessed by some of the principal mansions, many of them of great magnificence, which start perpendicularly from the rock, in some instances without an inch of space beyond, and offer views soaring wide o'er land, sea, and sky, and windows whence one shudders to look down. However the landscape may brighten and thicken beneath the influence of summer, it is hardly possible to imagine it more striking than as now seen in its winter drapery from the outer houses of the Domberg. The busy, smoky, snow-roofed town, interspersed with lines of ancient fortifications, and bound in with Gothic walls, towers, and gates; the Lutheran and Russian churches breaking, with their variously formed spires and domes, the line of frozen sea, which "spreads in many a shining league" round two-thirds of the horizon, are the main features of this winter picture; while on the right a steep rocky coast juts boldly through the snow, and in front the

modern Russian navy, and, more distant, the ruined convent of a different period and people rear their shapes in lines of frost.

The Domberg possesses two outlets: the one through a massive low tower and over a sloping angular bridge, a quarter of a werst in length, which unites it with the flat country side; the other a precipitous descent between two high walls, of evident artificial formation, terminated suddenly by a high tower, through the narrow archway of which all passage to and from the town occurs: and theatre, club-house, and other attractions being below, and much business and no shops above, the traffic through this slender port-hole is very considerable. Nor is it unattended with danger; for, with the steepness and acceleration of the descent, all equipages here obtain an impetus equally hazardous and difficult to arrest. The narrowness of the pass itself, which furthermore takes an awkward curve beneath the very archway, allows only space for one vehicle; while the ends of three of the most frequented streets in the lower town, concentering at this point, draw

together a population which greatly multiplies the chances of dangerous collision. To obviate this, all postilions and coachmen descending the hill are bound to give notice of their approach by a loud whoop, which a sentinel stationed in the archway repeats with all his strength for the benefit of those approaching from the town, who consequently draw up till the swiftly propelled machine is safely past. A neglect of such precautions has led to terrible accidents, and I cannot say that I ever approach the gateway on either side without a slight nervous twinge. Descending, every precaution is used to check the speed of the horses, but ascending, the reins are abandoned to them, and no sooner do the intelligent animals descry the fatal archway than they accelerate their speed, dash boldly at a difficulty which can only thus be overcome, and scaling the eminence with all their strength, with their plunging hoofs high above your head, scatter clouds of dust, mud, or snow, according to the season, behind them. I need hardly add that our residence is included in this *galerie*

noble, so difficult of access, and which tries equally the strength of our lungs as that of our beautiful horses; for, greatly to the wonder of the neighbourhood, who are far more sensitive to their own climate's inclemencies than our more southern-nurtured selves, we generally profit of this unremittingly fine weather to take pedestrian exercise.

At this present date, however, our walks and gaieties are equally checked by a visitation of the severest weather this winter has hitherto brought. Returning from a drive in an open sledge the air struck us as most unbreathably cutting, and upon inspection the thermometer was found at 12° below zero.—Before night it fell to 25°, where it has since remained pretty stationary; while a sun, in a sky maliciously serene, shines cloudless from morn till night, and then abdicates this snow landscape and frozen ocean to a moon, soft, full, clear and yellow, with not a breath of halo betwixt its bright edge and the deep, deep sky.

It is remarkable that when the atmosphere without averages 10° Fahrenheit, a tempera-

ture of 64° indoors is ample for comfort; but when the outer cold sharpens to 20° below zero and downwards, not even a heat of 70° in the rooms will keep the person sufficiently warm. We walk nevertheless in moderation, and in order to spare servants and horses, who at such seasons are great sufferers for the pleasures of their Herrschaft, abstain as much as possible from evening amusements. These are most unsocial expeditions, for no more air is admitted to the face than is necessary for the tightened respiration, and no more light to the eyes than to guide you on your way; while in the walking bear or wolf who stalks past you, the roof of his fur cap meeting the fence of his fur collar, and nothing visible of the "human face divine" but the sharp end of a very red nose, no one would recognise their nearest relative. The first perception on issuing into the congealed air is the immediate stiffening of your nostrils and weighting of your eyelashes, while any little unguarded isthmus between sleeve and glove, or strip of territory just above the double fur boots, feels instantly

as if grasped by a cold wet hand; and by the time you have walked a hundred yards you are generally so chilled, that, though you hug your *Pelz*, or fur cloak, double over your person, an irrefutable sensation tells you that, in spite of positive demonstration to the contrary, it is blown wide open. No rude wind, however, is to be apprehended on such occasions, for intense cold is here accompanied by perfect stillness of the air. Difficult as it may be to promote circulation under ordinary movement in such an atmosphere, there is nevertheless a peculiar pleasure in braving its utmost pinch —in sallying out behind a barricade of furs and hearing the snow crisp and creak beneath your footsteps, with the comfortable conviction that where neither warmth nor wet exists, neither dirt nor corruption can assail the senses. The descent, half running, half walking, of the Domberg is agreeable enough, but the ascent might be objected to as rather too bracing.

This accession of cold has occurred somewhat inopportunely for the celebration of a marriage to which about a fortnight previous

we had been bidden, according to the custom here, by a printed circular richly decorated, in the following form:—"*Der Trauung meiner Tochter Malvina Beata Wilhelmina Olga mit dem Herrn Ferdinand Woldemar Magnus Graf von —— am 26ten Februar, des Jahres, Abends um 7 Uhr in meiner Wohnung gütigst beizuwohnen, bitte ergebenst, Carl Johann Graf von——.*" From the peculiar character of the bride's father, this occasion has excited an unusual interest in our circles. Count —— is a man of few words at home, but those few are law. In order that his countess should never flatter herself with the existence of a will but of his moulding, he selected from his acquaintance a good little girl of fourteen years of age, whom he drilled into such a beautiful state of passive obedience, that, except wearing a cap, here the most indispensable evidence of matronhood, and furnishing his house with three little formal effigies of himself, she has never manifested signs of having progressed a day. Scandal indeed relates that at one time the countess evinced such alarming symptoms

of dawning free agency that her lord addressed to her the following words of King Gustavus, "Madame, nous vous avons pris pour nous donner des enfans, et pas des conseils," or words to that effect, and sent her supperless to bed; but M. de —— gravely declares this to be a malicious defamation of the countess's fair name, and more than controvertible by the internal evidence of her character.

As to her daughters, this system has been practised so successfully from their infancy, that the factionary idea of speaking, acting, thinking, or even feeling for themselves, is supposed never to have entered their heads. And any suitor for the honour of their alliance would as soon have thought of commencing his cause by sounding their affections, as the candidate for a close borough by canvassing the voters. All applicants therefore proceed direct to the domestic autocrat himself, who, with a regard for his daughters' worldly comforts which some parents might imitate with advantage, invariably dismisses all penniless proposers in the following laconic formula:—"Sir! my daughters

are accustomed to live well, to dress well, and to drive well!—Sir! I wish you a very good morning." Some of these amorous Lacklands have, it is thought, buoyed their hopes with the supposition that so wealthy a papa was security enough for the maintenance of all these items, but the old gentleman is not accustomed to render any account to the world of his paternal intentions. Nor was it till a suitor appeared backed by a *Schulden-freies Gut*, a debt-free estate, and other undeniable guarantees for table, garderobe, and stud, that he was known to deviate from his usual ominous dismissal, when, walking at his accustomed pace into his daughter's room, he said, "*Malvina, du bist Braut*," to which the dutiful girl replied, "*Gut, papa*," and not so much as inquired "*mit wem?*" with whom? Such at least is that incorrigible Baron C.'s account.

Accordingly, at the appointed hour, we drove in full evening dress to Count ——'s house, and were received at the door by four shivering marshals, or, in other words, bachelors selected from the mutual families, each

with a white bride's knot round his arm, who ushered us into a room dazzling with excess of light, where sat a formal circle, the married ladies on one hand, the unmarried on the other, and where the countess, a blooming young woman scarce older-looking than her daughters, received us in silence.

It is so much the habit in our civilised age to regard a marriage de convenance as a thing repugnant to human nature, equally tyrannical in act as cheerless in result, that though sad experience had taught me the fallacy of trusting the brightest of wedding hopes, or the most impatient of wedding faces, I involuntarily entered these rooms with the feeling of assisting at a sacrifice. Far, however, from the system of marriages de convenance being one of oppression and degradation towards the female sex, I am inclined to think that, in a country where custom marries a girl before she can know her own mind, far less that of others, and where the rules of society interdict all previous acquaintance, it is, on the contrary, one of mercy and protection.

What act can be more tyrannical to the future woman than the indulgence of the girl's so-called first love? What results more cheerless than the vital mistake of a hasty choice? Granting both the marriage de convenance and that of affection to be productive of happiness, this quality, which in nine cases out of ten is not the spontaneous blossom of early love, but the after-growth of esteem and habit, is in both instances equal in amount. But reverse the picture, and view married life in its miseries, how infinitely sharper is the sting of that evil incurred by voluntary choice, than imposed by duty or custom! Sufficient for the day in both cases is the evil thereof, but who will deny that the woman who has been forced to disinvest the object of her choice of the colours in which she had fondly decked him, suffers anguish of a far more poignant nature than she whose view of her own condition has never been intercepted by a soft though deceitful medium?

In the pair about to be united, if the act on the lady's side was not beautified with the

graces of affection, yet, had she had the widest scope for choice, she could hardly have given her well-wishers more reasonable grounds for hope. For the *Bräutigam* was one of a family whose simplicity, kindness, and integrity are proverbial in Estonia—one whom the quiet girl might find it equally easy to obey—or rule. As we entered, a lamp fell from the wall and shivered to atoms—of course a good omen where none other was to be accepted. The only sign of the approaching ceremony was a small carpet spread in the centre of the parquête floor. Here the clergyman with open book in hand soon took his place, and immediately the bride entered, led by her father, and followed by the bridegroom and a long bridal train. The destined couple now took their place upon the carpet before the clergyman, the four marshals, bearing heavy candelabras, lighting from the corners, while the rest of the company gazed promiscuously on. The ceremony commenced by an exhortation, kind and moral, but of no higher, or Scriptural import. We stood where the countenances of the pair were

not visible, but the bridegroom's thin, high cheek-bones were pale as death, and the myrtle wreath trembled like an aspen on the head of the otherwise motionless bride. This exhortation lasted scarce above five minutes, was succeeded by the Scripture admonition to husbands and wives, and by the usual routine of vital questions, to which each answered in a distinct affirmative. There was no altar—no kneeling—a ring was put on the hand of each by the clergyman, the blessing imparted, and all was over. The bride mechanically received her husband's kiss, and then sought her mother's and sister's embrace. Sweetmeats and wine were immediately served, and ere five minutes of this new union had elapsed a *Polonaise* began, where neither age nor infirmities were spared, and where an old lady of eighty tripped it as lightly as the bride. A general hilarity pervaded the party, including even the old count himself, who pushed his new wig higher up his forehead, and seemed inclined somewhat to slacken the reins over his remaining charges; but the bride retained her pensive demeanour, and

two painful, bright spots of red in cheeks of that alabaster hue which characterises the Estonian ladies. And now succeeded a regular ball—quadrilles, cotillons, mazurkas, where the bride and bridegroom were danced with, selected for the different *tours*, and brought together by such witty and frequent devices as hardly to leave them breath for sighing. Then came a grand supper, with toasts and sententious speeches, wher e the four indefatigable marshals waited on the company, and, returning to the ball-room, the bride vanished, and in the space of a few minutes reappeared clad in an unbecoming matronly cap, her discarded myrtle wreath hanging on her arm. At this all the unmarried girls formed a circle round her, when, with a pensive, suffering look, which brought tears into many a bright eye, she kissed each in sign of farewell from their ranks. The same ceremony was performed by the bridegroom with his comrades, but brought tears into nobody's eyes. Then again the maiden circle encompassed the bride, who stood, a pretty emblem of

Cupid, with blinded eyes, and wreath in hand, while they passed round her, but saw well enough to put it on the head of her husband's eldest marriageable sister. This delighted the old count, who rubbed his hands and exclaimed, "*Meine Tochter wird eine kluge Frau werden!*" my daughter will make a clever wife. The bridegroom was served the same, and by rather a puzzling countertype bestowed his hat upon one of the youngsters surrounding him, who now with uproarious voices seized him in their arms, and disregarding his bride's nerves tossed him aloft, his long legs almost reaching the ceiling, in sign of having utterly cast him out of their fellowship.

Four o'clock struck ere the guests began to depart, but by noon the next day the new married couple were occupied in receiving a throng of morning visiters who came to congratulate. The same day was a large dinner-party,—the same evening the pair appeared at a public concert.—The following days were spent in a succession of entertainments, and thus the

spring-time of wedded happiness was offered up for the enjoyment of the public. Nowhere are there such volumes of high-flown trash written on bridal modesty as in Germany, and nowhere is it less respected.

LETTER THE THIRTEENTH.

Street scenes in Reval—Obstinacy of Shoemakers all over the world—The beautiful Jewess—History of the Butcher—Woman's devotion—An absolute Government—History of Reval and Estonia.

IN respect of physiognomy and costume, the streets of Reval offer almost as much variety as those of Petersburg. With the standing colony of army and navy is come also the long-bearded Russian *Kupetz*, or merchant, who is seen pacing gravely before his open shop, where neither fire nor candle is admitted, his hands drawn deep within his ample sleeves, his face nestled between his warm cap and beard, but who, the moment a customer approaches, retires behind his counter and asks what the *Sudarina*, or signora, requires, with more grace

and courtesy than would be found in Howell and James's. These are the shops whence the Wirthschaft is provided wholesale with tea, coffee, and all the items of grocery; including the *Pastelló*, or Russian *bonbon*, the dried sweetmeats from Kieff, &c., and also with the bright handkerchiefs, coarse lace, the coachmen's silken belts, and other articles of dress with which their dependants are here supplied. The native Estonian peasant is scarcely more the tenant of the streets of Reval than the Highlander of those of Edinburgh; and even these long-haired and long-coated figures are interspersed with the people from the isles of the Baltic—that group of islands which a graceful historian has termed "the Estonian Archipelago,"—and from the opposing shores of Sweden, who sledge over the smooth ocean-track and sell their commodities of coarse linen and lace from door to door, or practise contraband acts with greater caution. The women usually betray the national distinction, for, however the person may be enveloped in the prevailing sheepskin, the cap is sure to have

some marks of peculiarity more or less gaudy. These caps, generally a structure of pasteboard, well wadded, and covered with chintz or silk, with various devices in lace, ribbon, and gold or silver fringe, are heavy and heating in the extreme; and were it not for the pride that feels no pain, many a young matron would gladly throw these oppressive honours from her aching temples: but here such importance is attached to this portion of the dress, that an Estonian woman, called up in the night, will pop her cap on her head before she passes a petticoat round her person. The Russian women are distinguished by a handkerchief, generally red or yellow, bound tight round their temples, from beneath which not a hair is visible.

Returning one day from a fruitless search through the streets of Reval for some shoemaker who should be induced to undertake the mysteries of the right and left principle,—this being an adaptation which the happy form of the German feet renders superfluous,—we turned into a court, where resided our last

chance for these more refined attributes of St. Crispin. In a narrow passage leading to it stood a slight female figure clad in the most jagged garb of beggary; a cluster of rusty saucepans and tin pots slung over her shoulder, and an air of vagabondism, which, added to her dirty rags, made us shrink closer together to avoid contact. This apparently she remarked, and turned slowly upon us as we passed, a face, not vulgar, nor bold, nor coarse, nor degraded, but of such surpassing loveliness, such a living resemblance of that most touching of all delineations of female beauty, the Beatrice Cenci, but more youthful still, and if possible more pathetic, that we gazed in perfect wonder. Nor, though our shoemaking errand was attended with the same barren result, did we pause to add the usual lecture, not on the impolicy of a shoemaker going beyond his last, but on the stupidity of his not acting up to it, which we had most liberally bestowed on his predecessors, but, as if spell-bound, hastened to emerge. There stood that abject figure, with that exquisite *Mater Dolorosa* head, like a

beautiful picture framed in tatters. Long and riveted were our glances, but that marble face heeded us not; listless and unconscious as a child, she turned away, and seemed to have no idea beyond her saucepans. We passed on, and had proceeded about a hundred yards, when,—*c'était plus fort que nous*,—we tacitly and simultaneously turned about and retraced our steps. "She is no Estonian," said the one; "She is an angel!" said the other; and these were our only words of mutual intelligence. My dear companion now addressed her in Estonian, the current language of most of the lower orders, but she shook her head and pointed to her vile saucepans. German was tried, but with little better result, when impatiently I stammered out in most barbarous Russian, "What art thou, then?" "*Ya, Yevreika*," "I am an Hebrew," was the laconic reply,—but it spoke volumes.

Such a prize, which only increased in every nameless grace the longer we viewed it, was not lightly to be relinquished; pointing, therefore, to our home on the rocks, we fixed a meet-

ing with our vagrant beauty for the next day, and gently bowing her head, she turned away.

Beauty, as a manifestation of the Infinite, has at all times a subduing influence over the soul; but here this indefinable feeling was increased tenfold by the outer wretchedness of the object, and by its lofty avowal of a despised and persecuted race—one, here particularly, treated with all the contumely an unchristian spirit can devise. It was therefore with feelings of childish impatience that I awaited the reappearance of this pale vision, while some lurking recollections of the besetting sin of younger days—which, by viewing all objects through the medium of a sanguine fancy, had often been of great temporary advantage to others, and of subsequent mortification to myself—made me doubt whether, in the enthusiasm of the moment, I had not overrated the first impression. Ten o'clock arrived, and the Jewess was ushered in. I looked up almost in apprehension, so reluctant was I to lose the sweet image which my mind had retained. But what would mortal wish

for more? It was the Cenci herself—the same open forehead, delicate nose, and full small mouth,—the soft hazel eyes alone exchanged for orbs of the deepest violet hue, fringed with long lashes which sunk beneath my gaze, and fell on cheeks of alabaster slightly flushed with the morning exercise. Her temples were bound with a handkerchief of a full blue, which repeated with unstudied art the peculiar colour of her eyes. Her wretched garments were partially hidden by a decent *Kasoivoika*, or half-cloak, which hung negligently from her shoulders, while the open fur collar enclosed the fair throat and head, like the lotus-leaf round the bust of an Isis.

The name of this beautiful being was Rose; she knew no other; and my companion and myself exchanged looks of increasing sympathy and interest on learning that the young creature, only sixteen years of age, who stood before us, had been three years a wife, and was now the mother of a child old enough to run alone. Her manners corresponded with the unconscious graces of her person. She gazed with abstraction and languor at us as we continued our glances of

admiration, and while preparations for a sitting, which was to furnish some visible memento for future days, of a face never to be forgotten, were going forward, sat down and carelessly examined some trinkets which lay on the table, while Sascha, not partaking of her mistress's poetry, kept a sharp eye upon her. But this she heeded not; and having satisfied a passing curiosity, this young Israelitish woman laid them down with apathy, and, folding her small hands fringed with rags, sat like the statue of Westmacott's "Distressed Mother," the image of uncomplaining poverty and suffering.

Comprehending now the object of her visit, she remonstrated against being taken in the head-dress of a Russian, which her plain handkerchief denoted, and earnestly requested the materials for her national turban, which she always wore at the Saturday Synagogue. We left the girl-mother to do as she would, and selecting from our stores a large handkerchief of bright colours, and tearing a strip of muslin, which she bound round her temples, and fastened with long ends behind—the identical

ancient Hebrew fillet—she proceeded to fold the handkerchief in the requisite shape, upon her knee. We watched her with indescribable interest. How many hundred years had elapsed, and these small fingers adjusted the peculiar head-dress of her people in precisely the same form as if Jerusalem were still her home, and the daily sacrifice still offering! And soon this young descendant of the oldest people stood before us the youthful wo-begone Hagar of the old masters. But yet her physiognomy could scarcely be termed Jewish, as indeed my many and miscellaneous types may have evidenced, unless the tribes included softer and cooler looks than painters assign them, or than their descendants have preserved. She said she was not unhappy; that her husband, a sailor in the Russian navy, was "good enough for her;" and she made no complaint of poverty, but this it was, combined with the inheritance of passive endurance, which was written on her pale brow. Our delicate Rose of Sharon sat gracefully and intelligently, and, when the drawing was completed, took our offerings with court-

eous thanks, but with more of carelessness and apathy than avidity. To kindred enthusiasts no apology is necessary for the length of this narration. Suffice it to say, that we never lost sight of our "beautiful Pagan," who continued to grow in our good graces, until the removal of the fleet carried her off to Cronstadt.

Quitting the sweet Jewess for a very different scene, we repaired to a dinner-party at the castle, where we found no poetry, it is true, though much of good prose. Here another romance of real life was disclosed, which gave matter for nearly as much disquisition as the now fairly raked out history of Griseldis. A butcher of the town, having been convicted of the flagrant crime of stealing two oxen from an open pasture near Reval, was now lying in the dungeons beneath us, previous to commencing his dismal journey for life to Siberia. This man was engaged to be married to a young mantua-maker, whose pretty looks and ways had often divided our attention with her fashions. Of course it was thought and advised by all who wished her well that the now disgraceful con-

nextion should be relinquished, but, resisting all entreaties and representation, she merely repeated a faithful woman's argument, "If he wanted my love to make him happy when he was innocent, how much more does he need it now he is guilty!" and declared her intention of accompanying him in his banishment. Accordingly the mournful wedding ceremony, the very antithesis of our last marriage de convenance, was performed in the prison vault, and a few days after, the innocent and guilty, now become one, started on their cheerless wedding trip. The faithful wife took with her the sympathy and blessings of every true woman's heart, and left behind a character which many an heroic matron of sterner times might have envied.* But let not a woman overrate the devotion of her sex. Whatever the sacrifice, whatever the suffering, there is such an instinctive pleasure in its exercise as would require more than a woman's prudence to forego.

* This journey did not continue farther than Moscow, for there, in consideration of his wife, a pardon reached the offender.

The woman, though not in this case, is as often falsely indulgent and banefully unselfish as the mother, and as often reaps only ingratitude.

The severity of an absolute government is most felt in the arbitrariness of a sentence. What has a criminal to appeal to in a law which makes and unmakes itself at will? As often as not, the convict who has worn out the prescribed term of banishment, returns not to be free. If the ruler will it, he remains his lifelong under surveillance of the police, can engage in no voluntary choice of occupation, while his children born in banishment are serfs, and disposed of as the crown appoints. Nevertheless, justice must be done to an absolute government. In this early stage of society, none other would secure to it the overbalancing equivalent of order and peace which Estonia enjoys under Russia. Too insignificant to govern herself, and too tempting and too central to be disregarded by others, Estonia has been bandied about by every northern power, and has exhibited a scene of suffering and discord, of which the history of the town of Reval is

sufficient to give an epitome. For this I must take you back to the year 1093, when the first buildings recorded as occupying its present site were erected by Erich IV. of Denmark. These consisted of a monastery dedicated to the archangel Michael, afterwards transformed into a convent of Cistercian nuns, the ruins of which are still standing, and whence the *Cisternpforte*, one of the gates of the town, derives its name; and a fortress called Lindanisse, and by the peasants Dani-Linna, or Danish town, whence the contraction Tallina, the Estonian name for Reval at the present day. To these were added other buildings; but it was not until 1219 that Waldemar II. of Denmark pulled down the fortress, probably on the Dome Hill, and set about erecting a regular town. From this time it appears to have been called Reval, about the derivation of which many have disagreed, but which appears with the most probability to arise from the Danish word Refwell, a reef; and well might this singular reef of circular rocks, which stands an insulated mass, with plains of deep sand

around, suggest the appellation.* Reval now became of sufficient importance to be quarrelled for by the Danes, the Swedes, the Livonian Knights, then recently united with the Grand Order of the Teutonic Knights, and even by the Pope himself, who, however, seems to have thrown his interest into the scale of Denmark; by whom, in 1240, it was elevated to the seat of a bishopric. To this was shortly after added the privileges of a Hanseatic town, upon the same footing as Lübeck, which for that purpose sent over a copy of her municipal charter,—a document still preserved in the archives. Trade now began to flourish, and was further encouraged during the regency of the Queen Mother of Denmark, Margaretta Sambiria, who selected Estonia as her *Wittwensitz*, confirmed and increased the privileges of Reval, endowed it with the right of coinage, &c., and enfranchised it from all outer interference. These privileges, however, did not extend to the Dome, where the Stadthalter, or governor, resided, and which, as it

* Another hypothesis might be advanced from a famous Danish standard, called Reafan, or raven.

still continues, was independent of the town, and not considered Reval. But even this short age of gold was disturbed by many bitter squabbles about rights of boundary, &c., which have by no means fallen into disuse. In 1284 Reval was included in the Hanseatic bond, and meanwhile this fertile province of Estonia, with its wealthy little capital, from being a widow's dowry, became a bride's portion, and in right of his wife, a princess of Sweden, was possessed for some time by a Mark-Graf of Brandenburg. After which it was again bandied about, being even known for a few years to govern itself! and was at length, the Danish coffers being low, formally sold, in 1347, to the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order at Marienburg, and given, at first in trust, and afterwards as an independent possession, to his ally, the Master of the Order in Livonia.

The knights were very glad of so fair a province as an arena for their deeds, and, as far as incessantly and alternately defending and embroiling it, did their duty most valiantly, building also castles, where they lived in great pomp, and introducing the chivalrous feeling

of the age, and the luxury which always followed in the steps of these gay bachelors. And what with the increasing commercial wealth of Reval, this luxury was carried to such a pitch, that the gentlemen wore heavy chains of gold and pranced about on saddlecloths embroidered with jewels, and the ladies sported diamonds and other precious stones in such profusion, that an old chronicler says, "*dass man mit dem Werth desselben einen guten Handel anfangen, und Weib und Kinder nähren konnte;*" and at weddings and other such festivities, which were held in Gothic guildhalls, some of which still exist, the beer was poured out so unsparingly, that the ladies with their diamond looped dresses found the floor too slippery to keep their footing, and hay was brought in to mop it up. At this time *Plat deutsch* was the prevailing language, and perfectly consistent with these libations of malt and hops.

It may be supposed that all this luxury fell hard upon the neglected serf peasant, and an old saying still exists, that "Estonia was an Elysium for the nobility, a heaven for the

clergy, a mine of gold for the stranger, but a hell for the peasant," who, agreeably to the history of most republics, was ground down to the most abject poverty. Consequently, in 1560, they rose in immense numbers, attacked castles and monasteries, killing and slaying all before them, and menaced Reval, where many of their lords had taken refuge, so seriously, that with Russia, always a troublesome neighbour, invading their frontier, and unaided by their knights, who were fettered with debts, and had battles enough of their own to fight at this time, the Revalensers and the rest of the province formally threw off the dominion of the Order, and, calling over the aid of Sweden, took the oaths of allegiance to King Erich XIV., in 1561.

It is not to be supposed that the Order acquiesced passively in this transfer; on the contrary, it made several attempts to reassume its rights, while Russia, to whom Estonia had ever been an apple of discord, laid repeated siege to many of the minor towns. But, otherwise, peace prevailed during the Swedish sway, and

Gustavus Adolphus has left, in various wise institutions, many traces of his paternal government, and Christina his daughter, of hers, principally in the establishment of a so-called *Ritterbank*, or regular matriculated nobility. But the days of peace were chequered by alternate plague and famine, and the Hanseatic influence declining, Reval declined also.

The manner in which the provinces of Estonia and Livonia were wrested from Charles XII. of Sweden, by Peter the Great, is too well known to need repetition. The Estonians esteem themselves fortunate in being united to Russia under so enlightened a Zar, who left them all their privileges, and took much delight in his new acquisition, visiting Reval several times, and instituting public improvements. Reval indeed has received visits from all the sovereigns in turn, who have paid due homage to its beauty and salubrity, and also, among similar events, remembers with pride the visit of Nelson.

The province has been allowed to retain its own jurisdiction, which is administered by

twelve Landräthe, a strictly honorary office, dating from the 14th century, and as far above the vile corruption of the Russian courts of justice as our own English bench can be. The most distinguished names which fill the pages of Estonian history, either in an episcopal, military, or civil capacity, are those of the Barons Meyendorf, Üxcüll, the Estonian name for the same, but now a distinct family, Rosen, and Ungern, all of which still exist in very flourishing condition, with many others, of more recent origin, from Sweden, Russia, and all parts of Europe, including even the names of Douglas,* O'Rourke, and Lewis of Menar, which stand here in friendly propinquity, their British origin being overlooked in their established Estonian antiquity.

I will only add that Reval and Estonia—for their histories blend too much to be separated—were more or less under the dominion of Denmark until 1347, under that of the Order or

* Of the house of Angus none now remain, the last Countess Douglas, a beautiful heiress, having married a Count Igelström.

Schwerdt-brüder until 1561, under Sweden until 1700, since when they have proved themselves most loyal subjects to Russia, who selects her best civil and military officers from this Polyglot colony, and are caressed as "*mes bons Estoniens*" by Nicholas I., whom *Boje chrani!* or, in good English, God preserve!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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